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**Iron for infants**  
**Mental drugs kill**  
**Soweto Gospel Choir**  
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# CARDIOVASCULAR SUPPORT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

written by Eile Klein, naturopathic physician and author of "Read This if You Have a Heart" for Innotech Nutrition Solutions

**The Problem:** While billions of dollars are spent on research, heart disease is still the most common cause of premature death. Yet it is scientifically proven that heart disease is highly preventable and treatable through proper nutrition and supplementation. In most cases heart disease is associated with fatty and stiff arteries, or atherosclerosis, due to poor nutrition, smoking and lifestyle choices. In essence, these factors damage the collagen in the arteries and they become stiff, brittle and sticky.

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**Publisher & Senior Editor** - Joseph Roberts  
**Managing Editor** - Sonya Weir  
**Advertising Sales** - Adam Sealey, Phil Watson  
**Design & Production** - www.perubluesky.ca  
**Proofing** - Anthony Prosk

#### Contributors:

Robert Alstead, Alan Cassels,  
Pamela Coleman, Carolyn Herriot,  
Bruce Mason, Mac McLaughlin,  
Vesanto Melina, Danielle Nierenberg,  
Geoff Olson, Gwen Randall-Young,  
Lucy Sharratt, Sarah Small, Edward Snowden,  
David Suzuki, Eckhart Tolle

#### Contact Common Ground:

**Head office** 604-733-2215  
Toll-free 1-800-365-8897 Fax: 604-733-4415

#### Advertising: Adam Sealey

adam@commonground.ca

#### Phil Watson

phil@commonground.ca  
direct line: 604-536-1198

#### Editorial:

editor@commonground.ca  
datebook@commonground.ca  
classifieds@commonground.ca

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Cover design: Kris Kozak

### Take our food back to healthy

Whatever happened to our food? It was all natural, all organic. Now it's re-engineered to maximize profits for a cabal of faux food monopolists with their toxic chemicals, patented seeds, herbicides, gut-destroying, cancer causing krap dinners pimped out in bright shiny trance packaging. Check out who's behind the scenes spending millions so you don't know what is in

your food. A few powerful mega corporations constantly lobby against labeling GMOs vs. the many common sense organically minded folks who support transparent and mandatory labeling of GMO products. See our center spread that bares it all. We do have a right to know – just some don't want us to. Find out who they are. Read on. Vote with your food dollars.

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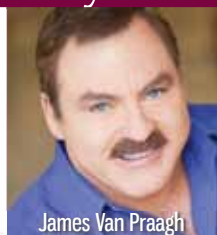
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# Gut-Wrenching effects of Glyphosate

by Pamela Coleman, PhD

**G**lyphosate is the active ingredient in one of the most heavily used herbicides in the world: Monsanto's Roundup®. The industry claims that Roundup® is quite safe, but authors of a recent article in the scientific journal *Entropy* reach a very different conclusion:

“Contrary to the current widely-held misconception that glyphosate is relatively harmless to humans, the available evidence shows that glyphosate *may rather be the most important factor in the development of multiple chronic diseases and conditions that have become prevalent in Westernized societies.*” [emphasis added]

This is a bold assertion. Is it possible that we are only now realizing the harmful effects of this herbicide that has been in common use since the 1970s? How does glyphosate harm humans? How did we overlook these problems for decades? Read on.

## Acute vs. chronic toxicity

The acute toxicity of glyphosate is relatively low, meaning that accidentally ingesting it will likely not cause immediate harm. Chronic toxicity – the effects of continually ingesting glyphosate residues in food –

is cause for concern. Glyphosate interferes with fundamental biochemical reactions and may predispose humans to obesity, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other health problems.

It's easy to overlook these effects. Toxicity studies on laboratory animals are typically short-term, often only a few months. The harm from low-level, chronic exposure can only be seen after a long period of time, often years, or even decades. The real guinea pigs in this case are humans.

From a scientific perspective, it is impossible to prove that a chemical ingested on food can harm a person's health decades later. However, it is possible to study the specific biochemical action of the pesticide and then examine the diseases that have been related to malfunction of that biochemical pathway.

## Indirect evidence of harm: Glyphosate interferes with biochemistry of bacteria

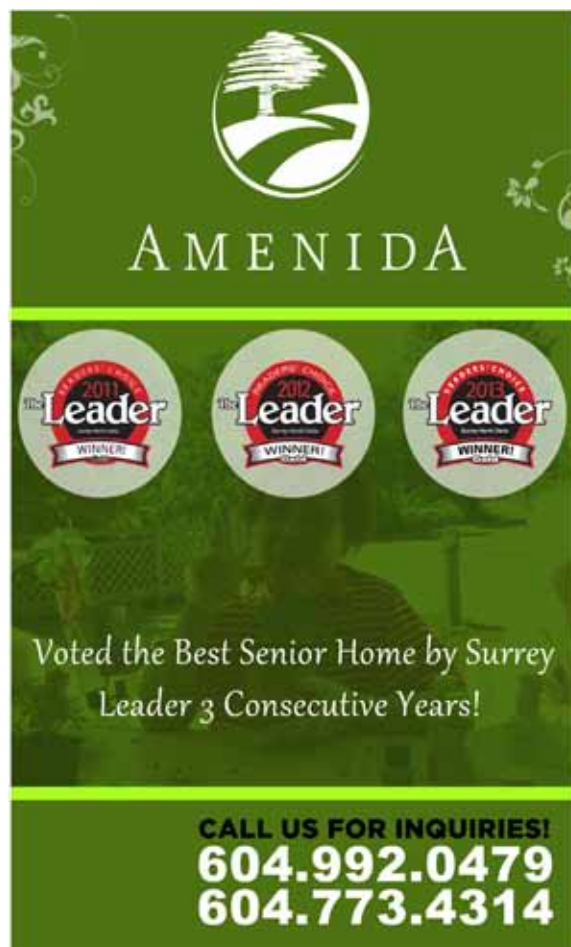
Describing the effects of glyphosate, the *Entropy* article states, “Negative impact on the body is insidious and manifests slowly over time.” The authors cite several ways glyphosate may contribute to the chronic diseases that have occurred with increasing frequency as use of the herbicide has increased.

Roundup® kills plants by interfering with a biochemical pathway involved with synthesis of amino acids, called the shikimate pathway. This pathway is not found in humans, therefore it was assumed that glyphosate does not harm humans. The pathway is found in bacteria, however, and humans depend on bacteria in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract to synthesize the essential amino acids.

By interfering with the biochemistry of bacteria in our GI tract, consumption of glyphosate depletes essential amino acids and predisposes humans to a host of chronic health problems. Specifically, glyphosate depletes the amino acids tyrosine, tryptophan and phenylalanine, which can then contribute to obesity, depression, autism, inflammatory bowel disease, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

There is also evidence that Roundup® inhibits cytochrome P450 (CYP) enzymes in plants and mammals. The CYP enzymes help to detoxify foreign chemicals (such as pesticides), regulate levels of vitamin D and control cholesterol in humans.

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**Nutrispeak** Vesanto Melina, MS, RD  
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HEALTH

## Iron for infants

Things have changed in the world of infant nutrition. In the past, strict sequences were suggested for introducing solid foods, however, these rules have been abandoned as our understanding of food allergies and infant nutrition evolved. In families with plant-based diets, the timing and sequence for starter foods are similar to those in non-vegetarian households. Whatever your family's eating pattern, it is recommended that, when baby's diet expands beyond breast milk or formula, you offer your baby iron-rich foods twice a day.

Why the focus on iron? This mineral plays a crucial role in growth and development. It is especially important for an infant's cognitive development. For the first six months, babies rely on the iron stores that were stockpiled when they were in the womb. At about six months of age, these stores start to run low and it's time to add iron-rich foods. While breast milk is superb as the sole food for the first four to six months of life, it is naturally low in iron. Thus, iron-rich starter foods can be added. For those using infant formula, most contain iron; check the labels.

Iron-rich plant foods include beans, lentils, tofu, nut and seed butters and iron-fortified infant cereals, also known as mush or pablum. Green beans and peas contain some iron. Cooked spinach contains iron, however, the mineral is bound with oxalate and less available. The iron (and calcium) in cooked, pureed kale are more readily absorbed.

**Whatever your family's eating pattern, it is recommended that, when baby's diet expands beyond breast milk or formula, you offer your baby iron-rich foods twice a day**

Beans or lentils can be mashed and smaller beans or lentils served whole as finger foods. Avoid offering larger whole beans that can be a choking hazard. In fact, take care to avoid any chunks of food or spoonfuls of peanut butter that may be difficult to swallow and cause choking.

Spread nut and seed butters thinly on toast, strips of tortilla or crackers. Babies tend to be able to grasp pieces of foods that are cut into finger-shaped pieces.

Cook tofu before serving it to babies less than 12 months old; steaming is one good way to heat it. Babies enjoy the texture of soft tofu and medium and firm tofu can easily be mashed. Cut firm and extra-firm tofu into long, thin strips; they make great finger foods.

Read ingredient lists when choosing infant cereals; many contain cow's milk (often as skim milk powder). Natural foods stores and grocery stores with a focus on natural foods are good places to find milk-free infant cereals. These can be mixed with iron-fortified formula or breast milk.

In general, vegetables, fruits – apart from apricots and raisins – and unfortified grains are relatively low in iron, but they add a great deal to the overall menu. Once you've introduced a few iron-rich foods, start including a wide variety of vegetables, fruits and grains to provide a variety of nutrients and for your baby to experience all the amazing tastes and textures of food. ◀

**April 29:** Meet **Vesanto Melina** at Banyen Books, 6:30pm. Vesanto is the co-author of the 2014 Canada Book Award winner **Becoming Vegan: Express Edition**.

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# Youth under the influence

## Mental health drugs based on biased sources

November 2012 press release from the BC Ministry of Health presented us with a bold and hopeful headline: “New program helps BC family doctors treat mental health challenges in children and youth.”

This announcement was readily welcomed in many quarters as it represented an explicit government commitment to help educate BC’s doctors on treating child and youth mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and ADHD. It was pretty encouraging after all the turmoil we’ve seen lately in the province’s health system; from the bizarre firing spree at the Ministry of Health to the continual stream of reports from BC’s Representative for Children and Youth about the horrific treatment of some of BC’s most vulnerable children.

The soothing words about the program having “an emphasis on non-drug treatments” left me quite hopeful, but two years later, there’s little to buoy my hopes. With an obvious pro-pharma bias in its orientation, it seems to me they’ve allowed the moneylenders into the temple once again.

Most of us couldn’t argue against strong public money going towards the education of our doctors – they need to be kept up-to-date and knowledgeable – but we’d also mostly agree that any educational material needs to be absolutely scrupulous and that we need processes in place to prevent the corruption of the program from those with an agenda other than the health of children.

BC’s new program is up and running here in Victoria and it will pay the doctors about \$1,400 for attending three half-day group educational sessions. It will also cover attendance for medical office assistants aiming to teach “enhanced identification and diagnosis of common mental disorders in children and youth” and so on. Sounds good, right?

I certainly don’t begrudge physicians getting paid for their time, yet after about 10 minutes of digging into the specifics of the program, my heart sank. Even as the program promises to introduce the docs to “non-drug management tools” (i.e. cognitive behavioural therapy), the key thrust of the program seems to be new ways to begin lifelong drug treatment for youths who happened to get screened and thus labelled with anxiety, depression or ADHD. To me, the suggested screening tools, which go by the names KADS-6, SCARED and SNAP-IV, represent a triumvirate of tools all derived from biased sources tied to the pharmaceutical industry.

You might think I worry too much and there are some treatments that are absolutely needed by very troubled youth. That is true, but what if the screening tools do what other screening tools do: identify people who will never go on to be sick and, in essence, make them worse off?

The KADS screen, named by its creator, psychiatrist Stan Kutcher, employs six questions to screen kids for anxiety. Dr. Kutcher, a bit of a media darling in Canada, is supported by a long list of pharmaceutical companies. He has been a researcher, consultant and advisor to GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer, Eli Lilly, Lundbeck, Wyeth-Ayerst, Abbott, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Janssen, Novartis, Organon and Boehringer Ingelheim – basically the laundry list of the world’s biggest drug companies.

His KADS-6 questionnaire (Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale) uses six simple questions to diagnose and assess the severity of adolescent depression by asking kids to self-rate on how frequently they feel low mood, sadness, feelings of worthlessness, tired or feeling life isn’t much fun. The options are “hardly ever,” “much of the time,” “most of the time” or “all of the time.” When you add up the scores, it draws a cutoff between “possible depression” and “probably not depressed.”

While this distinction might not be helpful for your average doctor, it may make it slightly easier to dish out a script for Paxil (paroxetine, a major antidepressant) for kids tumbling into the ‘possible’ range. Speaking of Paxil, if you stick Dr. Kutcher, Paxil and “study 329” into the maw of Google, you’ll marvel at what emerges. Superlatives aside, BBC called study 329, a Glaxo-funded study of using Paxil in kids, “one

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of the biggest medical scandals of recent times.” Kutcher co-authored the study and he and his colleagues concluded that Paxil is “generally well tolerated and effective for major depression in adolescents.” The reality is that the opposite was likely more true.

Revelations from court proceedings showed the drug was *more* likely to induce suicides in teens rather than prevent them. Nonetheless, studies like 329 and the researchers who wrote up the results helped Paxil turn into a mind numbingly huge blockbuster drug (sales of more than \$11 billion between 1997 and 2005) even as it turned many people around the world into hardened anti-pharma skeptics.

But those facts seem irrelevant when we invite Stan Kutcher and his KAD-6 screening tool to educate BC family doctors and help identify social and emotional problems in children and label them as mentally ill, with the ultimate result of plying them with drugs.

Another 329 study co-author, Dr. Boris Birmaher, is also in the BC tent with his SCARED (Screen for Child Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders) questionnaire, designed to tease out anxiety’s various iterations: General Anxiety Disorder, Separation Anxiety, Social Anxiety Disorder and what’s known as “Significant School Avoidance.” Now that’s a gig: creating a pathology and a mental illness out of kids who don’t want to go to school.

Dr. Birmaher is a widely recognized expert in pharmacological and biological studies of children and adolescents with mood and anxiety disorders and his disclosures indicate he receives or has received research support, acted as a consultant and/or served on a speaker’s bureau for Solvay Pharmaceuticals, Forest Laboratories,

Inc. and Schering-Plough. But let’s overlook his pharma connections and ask, “Can we trust that SCARED is a valid way of identifying anxious kids and directing them into programs where they do better?” No, we can’t because no one can say that those kids who have been through the ‘SCARED’ mill will do any better than those who haven’t. We only know one thing: they are more likely to be labelled and given drugs.

The author of the SNAP-IV questionnaire, James Swanson, has acted as a consultant and/or served on a speaker’s bureau for drugmakers McNeil, UCB, Eli Lilly and Com-

**BBC called study 329, a Glaxo-funded study of using Paxil in kids, “one of the biggest medical scandals of recent times.”**

pany, Cephalon, Janssen, L.P. and Novartis Pharmaceuticals. As far as I can tell, the SNAP-IV (originally created by Swanson, Nolan and Pelham) questionnaire is a fast track to ADHD drugs. We would heartily accept this screening questionnaire if quality research showed kids labelled with ADHD and thus fed stimulants did better than those who aren’t. One three-year study of ADHD drugs found that “medication use was a significant marker not of beneficial outcome, but of deterioration. That is, participants using medication in the 24-to-36 month period actually showed increased symptomatology during that interval relative to those not taking medication.”

For me, all three screening tools strike out. The inning is over. As they say in baseball, “three up, three down.” For the people who organize the ongoing education of BC doctors, I only have one question: “Really?” Do we really have to fund physician training using notoriously unreliable mental health screening tools created by people tied to the pharmaceutical industry? The medical literature is plump-full of research on the pernicious influence of financial conflicts in health decision making and you have invited the creators of SNAP, SCARED and KADS into the temple to besmirch the minds of our doctors?

I still remain hopeful.

My hope is that BC’s doctors are too smart for this and they’ll ask the hard questions about these so-called screening tools. Maybe they can appreciate that broad-based, community oriented, non-medical approaches to mental health are the best guarantee of success. Maybe they’ll realize that, as physicians, they can be very good at writing prescriptions, but we can do better. And maybe they too can be advocates for a program that won’t deliver more of our youth into the waiting arms of the pharmaceutical industry. [K](#)

**Alan Cassels** is the author of **Seeking Sickness: Medical Screening and the Misguided Hunt for Disease** and admits he has never met a mental illness screening program that delivers on its promises. **Open Pharma** is a new campaign to have all drug company payments to physicians made accessible to the public. Open Pharma is calling on the federal government to enact legislation requiring full disclosure of such payments. <http://openpharma.ca/>

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\*Reference: Anti-Influenza virus activities of commercial oregano oils and their carriers. Journal of Applied Pharmaceutical Science 2012; 02(07): 214-18.

# Teach children to eat well in 10 steps

by Danielle Nierenberg and Sarah Small

A new study has claimed that children with strict parents are more likely to be overweight. This warning comes weeks after British parents were criticized for being too lenient, an indulgence that, according to Sarah Beeny, a UK television presenter and mother of four, was fueling Britain's obesity crisis. And it's not enough to get kids to eat their vegetables so what can parents do to encourage healthy eating in their children?

We need to help children learn where their food comes from, who grows it and why it's important to share meals

with friends and family. Here are 10 ways families can eat with greater awareness and engage young people in food and agriculture:

1. Read books about food. There are dozens of books that teach kids about where food comes from, who grows it and what sorts of foods are both healthy and delicious. For example, *To Market, To Market* by Nikki McClure is a story of a mother and son who visit the weekly farmers' market where they learn how each food they come across was grown or produced. In *The Good Garden* by Katie Smith Milway, a teacher introduces student Maria to sustainable farming

practices that she begins to implement in her family's garden at home.

2. Play games. More and more computer and video games are incorporating food, like DooF (the word 'food' backwards), a combination of computer games, videos and a website where kids can read and learn about food-related topics. DooF takes a comprehensive approach to food, exploring not only the food itself, but also the culture, science and history behind it. Kids can play "Planet DooF," geared toward teaching children the origin of healthy food, such as fruits and vegetables.

3. Encourage farm-to-school and environment-based curricula in schools. Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution, for example, is a nonprofit organization that delivers food education to schools, youth groups, businesses and communities. JOFR teaches children about fruits and vegetables, facts on obesity and diabetes and how to campaign for better school food. "Learn Your Fruits and Vegetables" teaches children about foods they are unfamiliar with, where they come from and how they affect the body. And in Europe and the US, the organization Growing Food Connections prepares the next generation of leaders in food systems planning by developing curricula on food and agriculture.

4. Engage kids in community gardens and farms. Green Youth Farm is a Chicago-based farm that hires high school students and encourages sustainable practices in farming, cooking and selling food. And in Todmorden, England, Incredible Edible plants gardens around town and every school is now involved in the growing process as a form of food-based learning.

5. Understand the importance of biodiversity. SeedMap.org is a website dedicated to seeds, biodiversity and food with an interactive map showing seed diversity around the world and a map of the origins of food.

6. Start a school campaign dedicated to food security issues. The UN's World Food Programme is partnering with eBay's Giving Works project to raise money to provide healthy school meals to kids in need. And Tesco's Eat Happy Project in the UK tackles children's diet-related health problems and helps the next generation have a healthier and happier relationship with food through farm to fork trails, teaching toolkits and virtual field trips.



photo © Danil Chepko

7. Start a family garden. Families can begin gardening on a small scale with herbs that can grow on the windowsill. When kids are involved in the process of planting, watering, harvesting and preparing food with the herbs they grow, they feel more connected to food.

8. Watch educational programs. Catherine Gund's What's on Your Plate Project follows multiple kids and their families in their journey to learn more about the food system. Along the way, they discover the importance of being aware of what goes into food, where it comes from and who creates it.

9. Include kids in meal planning. Family trips to the grocery store and farmers' market will provide a learning experience outside of the home and the classroom. Creating shopping lists together will help children read and develop organizational skills. They can also learn how to categorize food and at the grocery store they'll be able to interact with fruits and vegetables, work out how many are necessary for a meal, identify colours and touch and feel the food.

10. Establish family meal times. Sharing meals as a family fosters better communication skills and a stronger sense of belonging, according to a study by North Dakota State University. A University of Florida study found that eating together at meal-times builds stronger family bonds, reduces the likelihood of obesity and increases the likelihood that each family member is getting a nutritious, balanced diet. ◀

**Danielle Nierenberg** is President of Food Tank ([www.FoodTank.com](http://www.FoodTank.com)) and an expert on sustainable agriculture and food issues. She has written extensively on gender and population, the spread of factory farming in the developing world and innovations in sustainable agriculture. **Sarah Small** is a research assistant at Food Tank.

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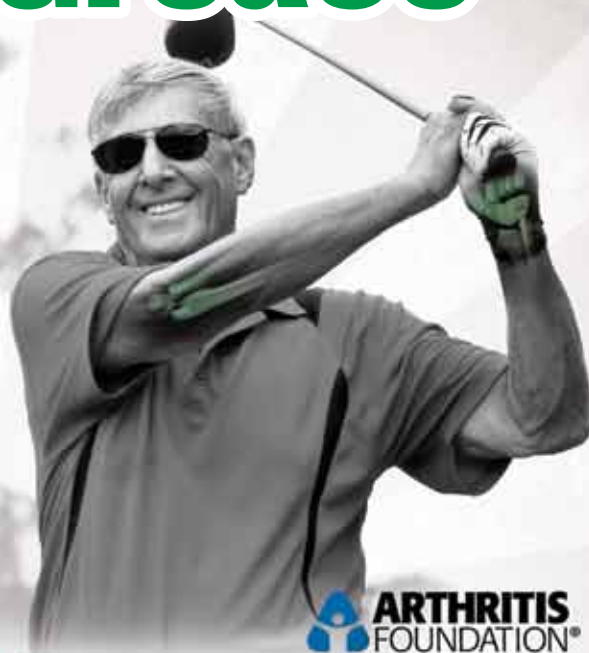
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# Sugar's deadly seduction

## Ain't she sweet

by Geoff Olson



I loved her from the moment she first touched my lips. She's really sweet. But I've had a long and difficult relationship with  $C_{12}H_{22}O_{11}$ , otherwise known as sucrose. She is also known as table sugar, cane sugar, beet sugar – but most of us just call her 'sugar.'

The liaisons began early with breakfast cereals like Captain Crunch, Cocoa Puffs and Trix. After school and on weekends I would demolish Twizzlers, whittle down Tootsie Rolls, inhale Pixy Stix, guzzle Coke and Orange Crush and chew multiple pieces of Bazooka Joe gum until they fused into one flavourless hunk of synthetic rubber.

In the summer, I would spear and roast marshmallows on a stick, suck on Freezies and make Coke floats with my Uncle Al.

All this chewing, munching and guzzling was just a warm-up for the annual rite of sugary self-abuse: Halloween. After my neighbourhood rounds, I would return home to examine my haul – the sacraments of Nestlé, Hershey's and other confection makers. After selecting a sizeable portion for immediate consumption, I would fall into a comatose sleep in a confusion of candy wrappers.

It would be misleading to say I had a sweet tooth; I had a sweet *tusk*.

My long-term love affair with sugar, punctuated by a predictable sequence of dental cavities and mercury amalgam fillings, segued into adulthood. Like T.S. Eliot's Mr. Prufrock, I have "measured out my life with coffee spoons," carpet-bombing cups of joe with sorry amounts of sucrose. By my early forties, my sugar intake was substantially the same in youthful substance, if not in style (chai tea, non-fat yogurt, swish Swiss chocolates, etc.). At this point, I was napping every day, which I assumed was a result of age. But a persistent brain fog began to concern me. I went to my GP, who referred me to a neurologist. Nothing was found in the X-rays. Around this time I met my partner, who had some simple advice for the zombified wreck she inexplicably chose to date. "Try going off sugar," she said.

I reduced my intake, and *voila* – no more afternoon naps and a general higher level of alertness. Not surprisingly, the 'sugar crashes' were storm warnings that I suffer from hypoglycaemia, the base station in the ascent up type 2 diabetes. I made this diagnosis on my own, with zero help from a lifelong conga line of allopathic witch doctors, none of whom ever asked a single question about my diet beyond alcohol consumption.



The average Canadian consumes 26 teaspoons of sugar each day. That works out to 40 kilos or 20 bags of sugar a year. The substance is used in 99% of the processed foods on store shelves.

My blood glucose levels had probably been yo-yoing like George Michael's career for most of my life.

The average Canadian consumes 26 teaspoons of sugar each day. That works out to 40 kilos or 20 bags of sugar a year. The substance is used in 99% of the processed foods on store shelves, former food industry executive Bruce Bradley told the CBC in the Fifth Estate documentary *The Secrets of Sugar*.

Food industry research departments have a Holy Grail for any given food: the so-called "bliss point," defined by the right combination of ingredients – mostly fat, salt and sugar – that light up the brain's reward centre like the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center. The name of the food industry game has long been more about addiction than nutrition. As a result, our grocery store shelves are full to bursting with sugary and saccharine junk foods, and all but the most health conscious among us have been reduced to junkies jonesing for cheap hits of fructose.

Many medical researchers have concluded that sugar

consumption, combined with sedentary lifestyles, is a leading cause of chronic disease, second only to smoking. Dr. Robert Lustig, UCSF Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Endocrinology, insists that sucrose in its present content in processed food is a "poison," plain and simple.

Sucrose is composed of the monosaccharides glucose and fructose. "The latter cannot be metabolized for energy, like glucose: the liver converts it to fats. The byproducts cause insulin resistance (leading to diabetes), inflammation and increased levels of fats in the blood (leading to cardiovascular diseases and promoting some cancers), increased uric acid levels (stressing the kidneys) and obesity that synergistically aggravates all of the above. This is well established in the scientific literature," notes David G. Harper, Associate Professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at the University of the Fraser Valley, in a letter to *The Vancouver Sun*.

Other medical researchers are now reporting evidence linking excessive sugar consumption with Alzheimer's disease. It's all pretty disturbing, but the sweet stuff has a long and ugly history. "The distortion and dehumanizing of human institutions and human lives caused by crack cocaine today is nothing compared with what the European desire for sugar did in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," wrote Terence McKenna in his 1992 book, *Food of the Gods*. Twelve million African slaves went one direction across the Atlantic while millions of tonnes of plantation cane sugar went the other.

Thankfully, just as we rethought slavery, we are now rethinking sucrose. In March of this year, the World Health Organization urged consumers to lower their consumption down to six teaspoons of sugar a day or no more than 10% of their daily caloric intake.

Some critics say we should regulate sugar the same way we regulate her slave trade siblings, liquor and tobacco. At the very least, we should be demanding more – or rather, less – from our health-compromising food industry. For the sake of our children, if not ourselves, we can start by voting with our wallets against the worst offenders in their line-ups of sickly-sweet food items – and that goes triple for anything containing high-fructose corn syrup or that alleged sugar substitute, the neurotoxic aspartame.

As for me, I still try to set boundaries with my insulin-spiking seductress and mostly keep to them, but her charms are hard to resist. Sucrose and I still have the occasional rendezvous, with wine and chocolates and the whole nine yards and I always feel bad the next morning. But at least now I'm on to her, like millions of other consumers. ◀

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On the Garden Path Carolyn Herriot

ORGANICS

## Earth, our home

At the time of writing it's Earthweek, a great time to be reminded of the Earth Charter created as a follow-up to the 1992 Earth Summit. The document was developed over a decade of extensive international consultation and in this column I'd like to share an extract from their website. I also encourage you to read the charter at [www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/](http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/)

"We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward, we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace.

Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life and to future generations. Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air.

### The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity and beauty is a sacred trust.

The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity and beauty is a sacred trust.

We must realize that, when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the environment... To realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well being of the human family and the larger living world.

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles. To fulfill this promise, we must commit ourselves to adopt and promote the values and objectives of the Charter. This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally and globally. Our cultural diversity is a precious heritage and different cultures will find their own distinctive ways to realize the vision. We must deepen and expand the global dialogue that generated the Earth Charter...

The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature. Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace and the joyful celebration of life." ◀

Carolyn Herriot is author of **The Zero-Mile Diet** and **The Zero-Mile Diet Cookbook** (Harbour Publishing) She grows "Seeds of Victoria" at The Garden Path Centre, [www.seedsofvictoria.com](http://www.seedsofvictoria.com)

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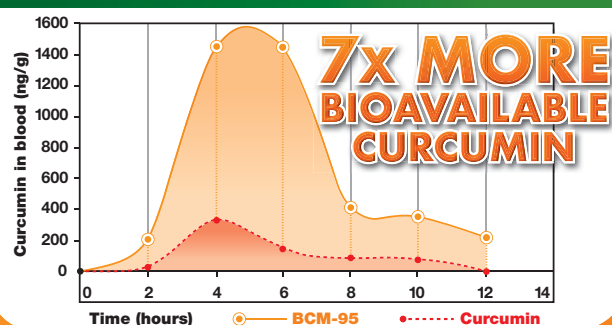


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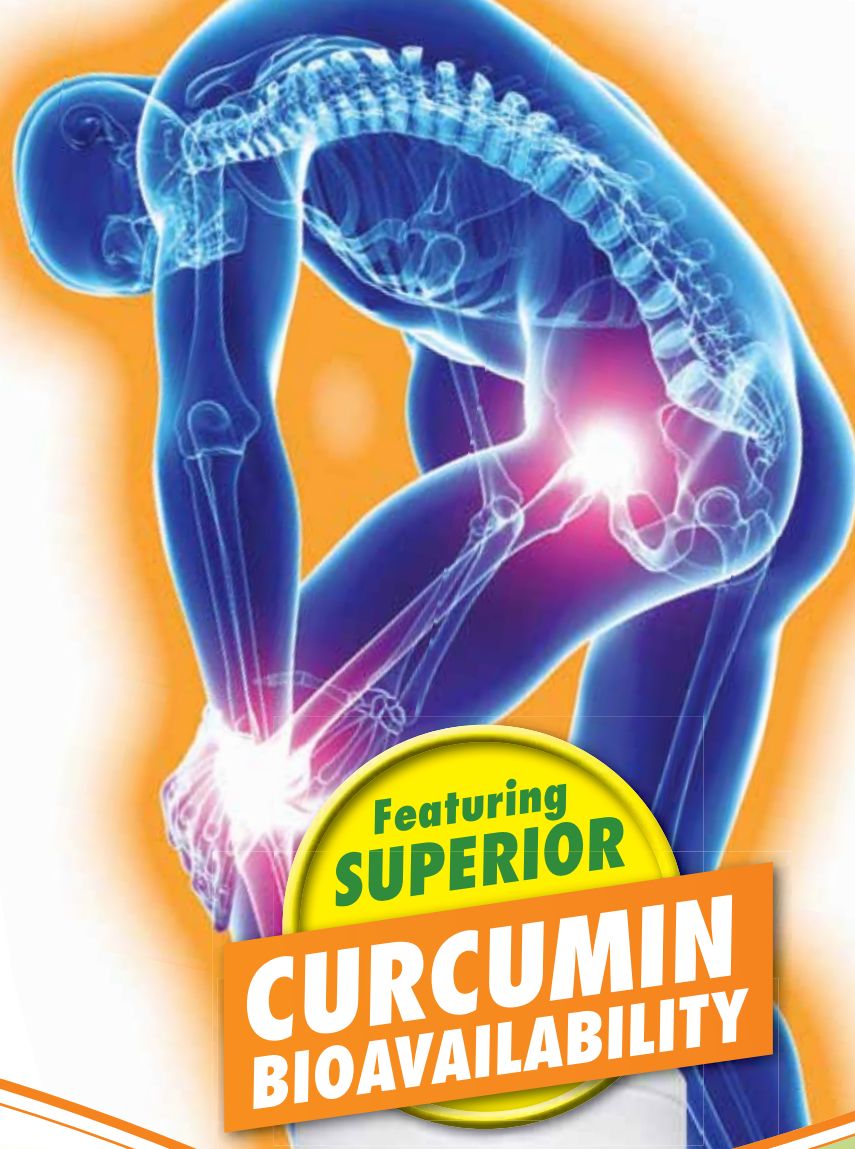
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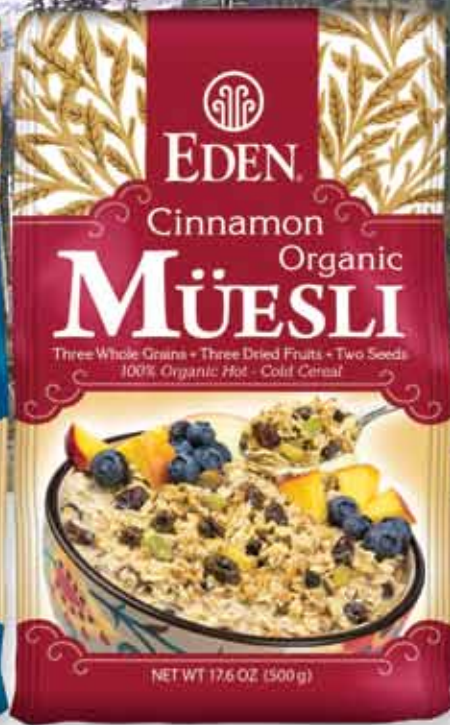
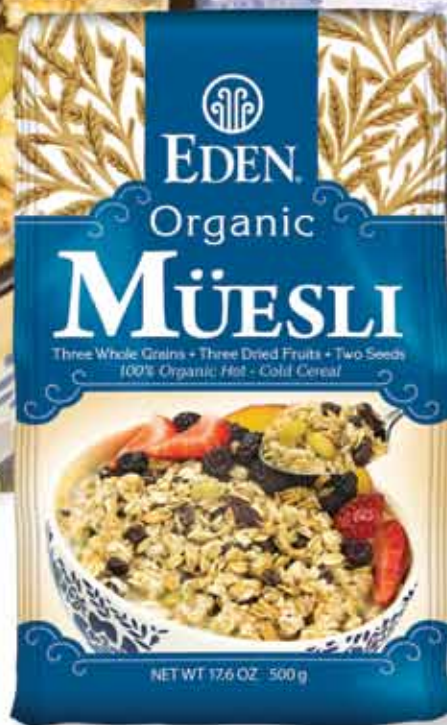
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# GMO BITES

by Lucy Sharratt, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network

## GM apple doomed

McDonald's and Gerber have said they have no plans to buy the GM "non-browning" apple that could be approved this year in Canada and the US. Now, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network and the Society for a GE Free BC are asking Canadians to write to the head office of their grocery stores and ask them to pledge not to carry the GM apple.

In Canada, we know that letters from customers to grocery stores and food companies are very influential. The customer is always right and it's now time to tell your grocery store and food company what you want. A new online survey from market research company Insights shows that 56% of people in British Columbia and 50% in Alberta would support a ban on GM foods in Canada. Increasingly, these people are making their views heard by the companies that make or sell the food they buy. That's you.

## GM out: the customer is always right

There are no labels on genetically modified (GM, also called genetically engi-

neered) foods in North America because the biotech industry knows the customer is always right. If there were mandatory labelling, customers could easily reject GM foods on supermarket shelves. But even without labels, many consumers are rejecting GM foods and convincing some food companies to do the same.

Food manufacturers are beginning to bend to consumer demands for non-GM food. Targeted consumer fury recently compelled General Mills to switch into brand-protection mode and announce it will remove GM ingredients (cornstarch and sugar) from its Original Cheerios recipe. Post company followed suit with its Grape Nuts cereal. While these are hugely significant moves, these cereals actually only contain a few GM ingredients so these products are an easy place for the companies to start.

Grocery chain Whole Foods will require labelling of all GM foods in its stores by 2018 and that one decision has already had an impact on many food companies. If companies want to sell their products in Whole Foods, which is

set to open more stores across Canada, they will need to label or remove GM ingredients. Removing them is a long-term calculation that bets on continuing consumer backlash to GM.

BC retailer Left Coast Naturals is determined to become 100% non-GMO by December 2015, with the help of the Non-GMO Project and cereal company Nature's Path has been well above the curve for many years.

## What is the GM "non-browning" apple?

A genetically modified apple could be approved in Canada and the US this year. The apple is genetically modified to not turn brown after being cut, with modified apple DNA and genetic material from two bacteria and one virus.

The GM "non-browning" apples are designed to look fresh when they're not and will mislead customers; 69% of Canadians don't want the GM apple approved.

GM contamination threatens the future of our apples and the farmers who grow them. The BC Fruit Growers Asso-

ciation officially opposes the GM apple and the U.S. Apple Association "does not support the approval of this product." This GM apple would be the first GM apple in the world and the first GM fruit to be grown in Canada

## Action alert: tell your grocery store to ban the GM apple

1. Visit your local grocery store and ask the manager to commit never to stock the GM apple.
2. Write to the head office of your grocery store and ask them to commit to keep GM apples out of the produce section.


These two actions will be very influential. The consumer is always right.

For "Talking Points" info to help you talk about the apple at your grocery store, visit [www.cban.ca/apple/talkingpoints](http://www.cban.ca/apple/talkingpoints)

For more info and action, see [www.cban.ca/apple](http://www.cban.ca/apple)

For actions in BC check out, [gefreesbc.wordpress.com/apple/](http://gefreesbc.wordpress.com/apple/). 

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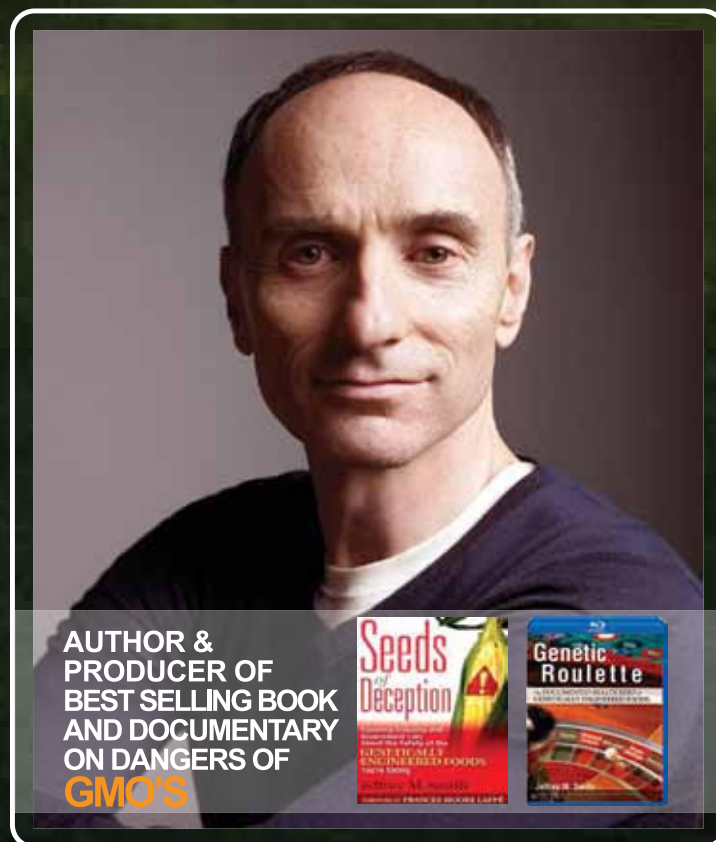
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*Other special guest speakers TBA*

# Edward Snowden tops TED Talks

## Take back our Internet from NSA & Prism

**T**ED conference attendees in Vancouver were surprised by a live video interview with Edward Snowden, March 18, 2014. Linked in from Russia to Canada with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union, Snowden talked in Canada, in his own voice, unfiltered by American corporate media. He tells what he did and why it is important. Please watch his full 35 minute video at [www.TED.com](http://www.TED.com), [www.commonground.ca](http://www.commonground.ca) or on YouTube. It is a most important video of our information era.

**Chris Anderson:** You've been called many things: whistleblower, traitor, hero... how do you describe yourself?

**Edward Snowden:** You know, everybody who's involved with this debate has been struggling over me, my personality and how to describe me. This isn't the question we should be struggling with. Who I am really doesn't matter at all. If

I'm the worst person in the world, hate me and move on. What really matters here are the issues of the government we want, the Internet we want, the relationship between people and societies. That's what I hope the debate will move towards. If I had to describe myself, I'm not a hero, patriot, traitor. I'd say I'm an American and a citizen. [Applause.]

When I was sitting in Maui, I saw a lot of things that disturbed me. But first of all, we do a lot of good things in the intelligence community, things that need to be done, that help everyone. But things go too far, decisions are being made in secret without the public's awareness or consent, without representatives in government having knowledge of programs. When I really came to struggle with these issues, I thought, "How can I do this in the most responsible way, to maximize the public benefit and minimize the risks?" I could have gone to Congress, where there

were no legal protections for private employees or a contractor, and a risk that I would be buried along with the information and the public would never find out. The 1st Amendment of the US Constitution guarantees a free press for a reason, to guarantee an adversarial press, to challenge the government and work with the government. I thought to have a dialog and debate about matters that are of vital importance — without putting national security at risk — by giving all my information back to the American people rather than trusting myself to make the right decisions about publication, and that we'd have deep debate, for the benefit for everyone. The risks that have been threatened, the risks that have been played up by the government have never materialized. There has been no evidence of a specific instance of harm so I'm comfortable with the decisions I made.

**Tell the audience what the Prism program really meant.**

First, what Prism isn't. The debate in the US is about metadata. That this is "just metadata." They're talking about the specific section 215 of the Patriot Act; this is warrantless wiretapping, phone-tapping, who you're talking to, when you're talking to them, where you travel — those are all metadata events. (Where as) Prism is about content. It's a program through which the government could compel corporate America, deputize corporate America to do the dirty work for the NSA. Even though some companies did resist — I think Yahoo did challenge this in court — they lost. But this was never tried by open court, only by secret court. This has been a talking point in the US government, that 15 federal judges reviewed the programs and found them to be lawful. What they don't tell you is those are secret judges in a secret court making secret interpretations of the law. There have been 34,000 warrant requests in 33 years and they only rejected 11 government requests. These aren't the people we want deciding what the role of corporate America in a free society should be.

The slide we're looking at (go to website) shows dates when companies joined the Prism program. They've

denied collaborating with the National Security agency (NSA), so how was that data collected?

The NSA's own slides refer to it as direct access. What that means to an NSA analyst, someone like me, who's targeting Chinese cyber acts, is that the provenance of data is directly from their servers. It doesn't mean that there's a group of company reps sitting in a smoky room, palling around with the NSA and making backroom deals to give stuff away. Some [companies] are responsible, some are less responsible. When we talk about this information and how it's given, it's given by the companies themselves, it's not stolen. Even though companies push back and say, "Hey, let's do this through a warrant process, we have some legal review and basis for handing over users' data," we saw stories in the *Washington Post* that said the NSA broke into the data center communications between Google to itself, Yahoo to itself. Even when those companies cooperate in a lawful manner with the NSA, the NSA isn't satisfied. We need our companies to work very hard to guarantee they're going to represent the interest of the user and advocate for the rights of the users. We've seen the companies named on the slides take great strides to do that and I encourage that to continue.

The biggest thing an internet company in America can do today without consulting lawyers to protect users worldwide is to enable SSL web encryption on every page you visit. The reason this matters is that today, if you look at the book *1984* on amazon.com, the NSA can see a record of that, the Russian intelligence service can see a record of that, the French, the German... It's unencrypted. The world's library, amazon.com, not only does not support encryption by default but you cannot choose encryption. I don't mean to single out Amazon; all companies should move to encrypted browsing by default. That will increase the privacy and rights that people enjoy worldwide. [Applause]

**What is Boundless Informant?**

All credit to the NSA for using appropriate names. Boundless Informant is a program the NSA hid from Congress. The NSA was pre- continued p.28...



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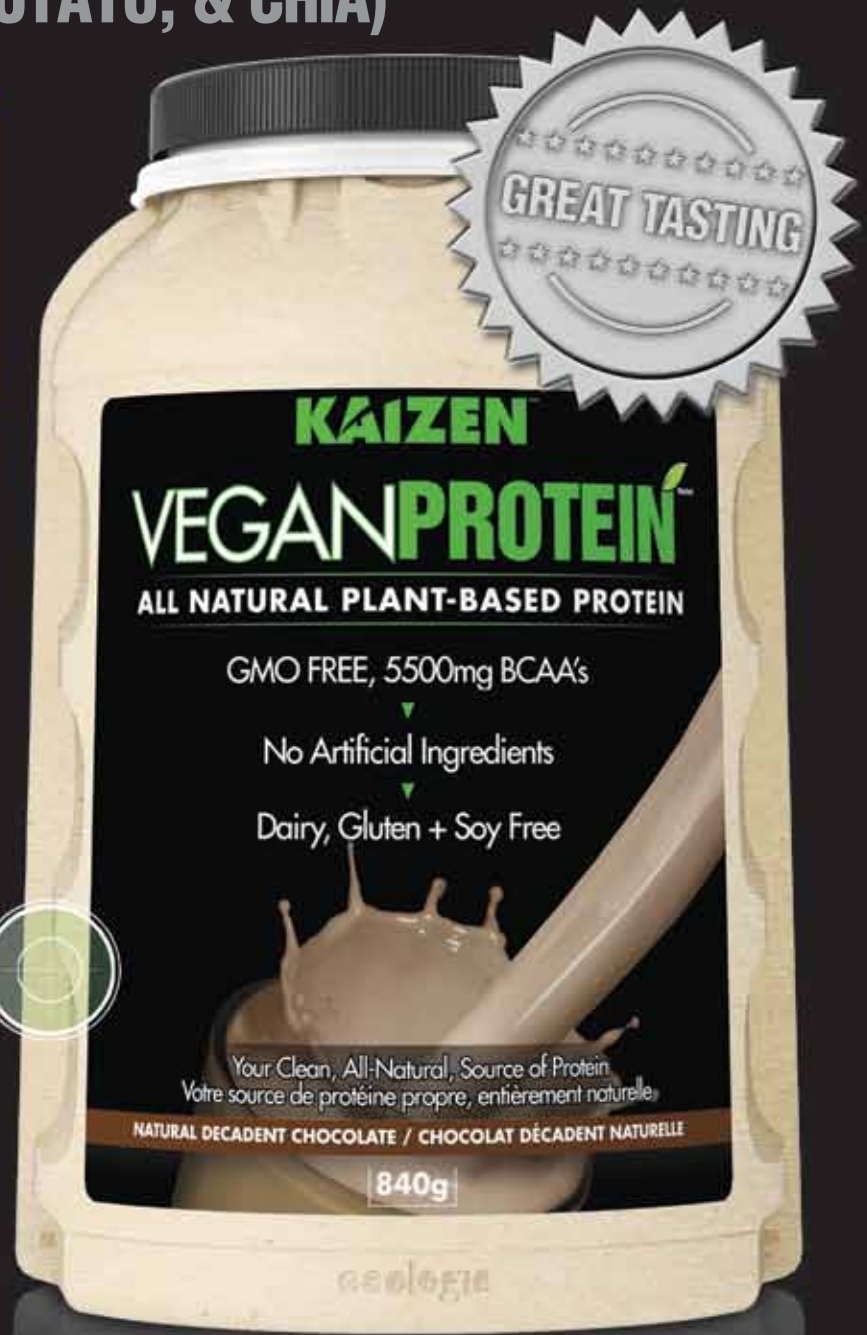
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WASHINGTON STATE GMO LABELING INITIATIVE

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## \*The Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA),

the trade lobby group for corporate food processors, funnelled money from its members to narrowly defeat GMO labelling in Washington State.

After public interest groups, including Cornucopia, informed consumers about the natural/organic brands owned by corporations that contributed money against the Proposition 37 GMO food labelling initiative in California last year, corporations faced outrage from their customers.

To avoid similar consumer backlash in their persistent fight against GMO labelling, companies attempted to hide behind the GMA by using it as a front for their campaign donations. This was ruled a violation of Washington state law by the state's disclosure commission. After the Washington attorney general filed a lawsuit against the GMA, the organization voluntarily disclosed which of its members have specifically contributed to the anti-labelling campaign.

## The GMO Divide — Let's All Reward the True Organic Heroes.

Over 60 countries around the world require GMO labelling or ban GMOs outright. But not in the US.

Democratic and Republican administrations, and Congress, have repeatedly ignored the overwhelming majority of Americans who favor labelling GMO foods in the marketplace. Our politicians seem to be listening to the corporate executives (their donors) instead of the citizenry. In Washington State, the people have a right to craft laws of their choosing at the ballot box.

**2014 update:** The Yes Campaign for I-522 raised \$8 million from 16,421 donors, most of them first-time political donors. The average gift was \$10. The No Campaign raised \$22 million from 12 donors, only six of them individuals, not corporations. The average gift was \$1.8 million. The No Campaign raised \$22 million from 12 donors, only six of them individuals, not corporations. The average gift was \$1.8 million.

On Election Day November 5, 2013, the official final result was 48.91% Yes to 51.09% No. Only 19,024 more Yes votes were needed for the initiative to win. I-522 actually won among every age group, except seniors. But it was seniors who determined the outcome because of the extremely low turnout of registered voters of only 45%.

Source: Vote Yes on I-522 campaign / [www.facebook.com/yeson522](http://www.facebook.com/yeson522)

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\* Total includes \$2,022 from David Brenner, CEO and \$1,000 from Michael Brenner, Company Executive  
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Science Matters David Suzuki

ENVIRONMENT

## Canadian cities need repair

Canada's federal government recently announced \$14 billion in new funding to help municipalities repair and replace aging infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, sewer lines, energy production/distribution systems, subways and other public transit. About \$1 billion is dedicated to smaller communities, but most of the funding will target urban areas, which makes sense.

Despite being a vast land of mountains, forests and ice, Canada is an urban nation. Over 80 percent of us live in large centres like Montreal, Toronto and Calgary, as well as rapidly growing communities like Regina, Surrey and Markham.

This increasing concentration of people in cities is consistent with rapid urbanization over the whole planet. Now, more than half the world's population resides in urban mega-regions and these are increasingly driving the global economy.

Over 60 percent of world GDP is generated in just 600 cities. This includes international financial hubs like New York City and London, but also emerging powerhouse markets in the developing world, such as São Paulo and Mexico City.

And to really flourish, municipal centres need infrastructure... With climate change impacts increasing, cities must also invest in storm-water management systems, including green infrastructure such as trees, shrubs, bioswales and engineered wetlands.

**Poor public transit is the Achilles' heel of urban development and is keeping many Canadian cities from achieving greatness.**


Unfortunately, Canadian municipalities lack the fiscal tools to generate the billions of dollars needed each year to maintain and expand essential infrastructure. Though they retain only a paltry eight cents of every tax dollar paid in Canada, municipalities must cover 60 percent of the cost of their infrastructure.

Starving Canadian cities of cash further increases the nation's municipal infrastructure deficit, which already stood at \$123 billion in 2007. And Canadians feel the pain every day, in the form of crumbling roads, mind-numbing and wasteful traffic jams and deteriorating bus, subway and streetcar services.

A survey of urban experts and other "city-builders" by engineering firm Siemens concluded that poor public transit is the Achilles' heel of urban development and is keeping many Canadian cities from achieving greatness.

The problem is unlike many European and American counterparts, Canadian cities don't have dedicated and sustained federal funding for core infrastructure needs, most notably public transit. For example, Toronto currently ranks 15th out of 21 large global cities on per capita investment in public transit... The failure to address transit funding – for capital and operational costs – has left residents in Toronto and its surrounding suburbs spending more time battling congestion to get to and from work than commuters in any other North American city. The Toronto Board of Trade estimates this costs the Greater Toronto Area economy \$6 billion a year in lost productivity.

Canada's growing cities have suffered from political indifference and inaction for too long. It's all about priorities and building world-class cities through federal investments in much-needed infrastructure should be at the top of the list.

Ottawa's funding announcement offers an opportunity to rectify the historical imbalance in political priorities. Investing in municipal infrastructure will ensure our cities succeed in a global economy. 

Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation Ontario and Northern Canada Director General **Faisal Moola**. Learn more at [www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org)



### Direct evidence of harm: Glyphosate kills beneficial bacteria

A study examining the effect of glyphosate on bacteria that grow in the GI tract of chickens found that beneficial bacteria were susceptible and harmful bacteria were resistant to glyphosate. The growth of four types of beneficial bacteria – *Lactobacillus*, *Bacillus*, *Bifidobacterium*, and *Enterococcus* – was reduced at low concentrations of glyphosate. The same types of beneficial bacteria inhabit the human GI tract and they are sold over-the-counter as a probiotic supplement. Some strains are also found in yogurt.

When exposed to the same levels of glyphosate that harmed the beneficial bacteria, several harmful bacteria, including *Salmonella*, grew successfully. The authors concluded that ingestion of glyphosate can disturb the normal microbial community and predispose chickens to carrying high levels of *Salmonella* or other harmful bacteria.

A similar study found that glyphosate was toxic to beneficial bacteria in cattle and hypothesized that glyphosate residues on cattle feed may predispose cattle to infection by *Clostridium botulinum*, the bacterium that causes botulism.

### Roundup use skyrocketing

When Roundup® was first introduced in the 1970s, its use was limited to weeds because the active ingredient glyphosate kills all plants. That changed with the introduction of crops genetically engineered (GE) to tolerate glyphosate. Glyphosate use has been increasing exponentially. From 2001 to 2007, glyphosate use doubled, reaching 180 to 185 million pounds in the US in 2007. One reason for the increase in herbicide use is the increase in corn acreage to produce the ethanol that is added to gasoline.

Herbicide use is also increasing on crops grown for food. First, glyphosate can now be sprayed over the GE crop itself, whereas previously only the weeds were sprayed. Second, herbicides are now sprayed on crops to kill the foliage just before harvest, particularly potatoes, beans and grains. These practices increase not only the amount of herbicide sprayed into the environment, but also the amount directly absorbed by the plants that are eaten by humans and livestock.

In response to this scenario, the agricultural industry requested

increases in the tolerance levels for glyphosate, that is, the residues allowed in food and feed. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) complied, raising the tolerance levels of glyphosate residue in many crops. For example, the levels for soybean have been doubled, from 20 parts per million (ppm) to 40 ppm.

This means that the genetically engi-

neered Roundup Ready® crops will have higher levels of glyphosate, even as scientists learn more about the insidious long-term effects of ingesting it.

This article highlights only a few of the scientific studies that show how glyphosate interferes with fundamental biochemical reactions and inhibits the growth of beneficial bacteria. As glyphosate use increases, there is increasing

urgency for additional studies to determine the effects of glyphosate consumption over a human life span. ◀

This story originally appeared in **The Cultivator**, The Cornucopia Institute's quarterly print publication available to members and online. **Pamila Coleman** is a Farm and Food Policy Analyst at the Cornucopia Institute, [www.cornucopia.org](http://www.cornucopia.org)

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viously asked by Congress to give a rough ballpark estimate of the amount of American communications being intercepted. They said they don't track those stats: "we *can't* track those stats, we can't tell you how many communications we're intercepting. To tell you that would be to invade privacy." But the capability already exists, it's already in place. The NSA has its own data format that tracks both ends of a communication. Boundless Informant tells us that more communications are being intercepted in America about Americans than there are in Russia about Russians. I'm not sure that's what an intelligence agency should be aiming for.

**There was another story, that the NSA broke privacy rules thousands of times a year. What was that about?**

We heard in Congressional testimony, and this was amazing for someone like me from the NSA who's seen the internal documents and knows what's in them, to see officials testify under oath that there were no abuses, no violations of rules. We knew this story was coming. One event out of 2,776 affected more than 3,000 people. In another event, they intercepted all the calls in Washington DC — by accident. What's amazing about this report is not only were there 2,776 abuses but the chairman of the Senate's Intelligence Committee, Dianne Feinstein, had not even seen the report until the *Washington Post* contacted her asking for comment. She then requested a copy from the NSA. What does that say about the state of oversight in the Senate when the chairman of the Intelligence Committee has no idea about thousands of abuses?

**You might think if you haven't done anything wrong then it doesn't really matter. Why should we care about all this surveillance?**

The first thing is you're giving up your rights. "I don't think I'm going to need them so I'll get rid of them, it doesn't really matter, these guys will do the right thing." But your rights matter because you never know when you'll need them. In democratic societies around the world, people should be able to pick up the phone, call family, send text messages to loved one, travel by train, buy an airline ticket — without wondering how those events will look to an agent of government, possibly not even your government but one years in the future. How might this be misinterpreted? We have a right to privacy. We require warrants to be based on probable causes. Trusting any government authority with the entirety of human communications without any oversight is too great a temptation to be ignored.... The prerogatives of people like Dick Cheney do not keep the nation safe; the public interest is not always the same as the national interest. The Internet is not the enemy, the economy is not the enemy.

**It's been alleged you stole 1.7 million documents. So far, hundreds have been shared. Is there more to come?**

There are absolutely more revelations to come. Some of the most important reporting is yet to come.

**There was another story about the campaign to crack and undermine internet security. Can you explain Bullrun?**

Again, we've got to thank the NSA for their can-

dor. This is a program named after a civil war battle. It targets our own infrastructure. It's a program through which the NSA intentionally misleads corporate partners, saying these are safe standards and we need to work with you to secure the system. In reality, it's bad advice to companies that degrades the quality of service. They're building in backdoors that not only can the NSA exploit, but so can anyone else with time and resources. They're letting themselves into the world's communications and this is really dangerous. If we lose a single standard, if we lose the trust of SSL, we will live in a less safe world overall. We won't be able to access banks or commerce without worrying about people monitoring our communications.

**So this means we're open to cyberattack from other sources too?**

Absolutely. The NSA has traditionally worn two hats; it's been in charge of offensive operations and defensive operations. Usually, it prioritizes defense over offense; American secrets are worth more. If we hack Chinese business and steal its secrets, or those in Berlin, that's of less value to the American people than making sure that the Chinese can't get access to our secrets. In reducing the security of our own communications, they're putting us at risk in a fundamental way.

**Someone is making the calculation that it's worth doing this, as a part of defense against terrorism. Is this a price worth paying?**

When you look at the results of these programs countering terrorism, you see that's unfounded. You don't have to take my word for it. We *continued p.39...*

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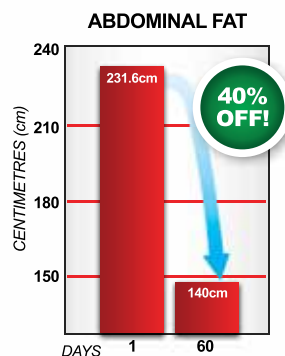
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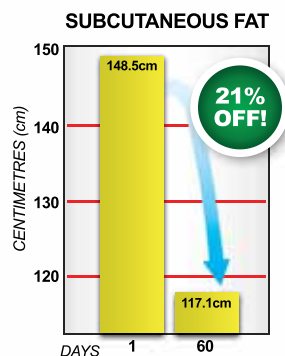
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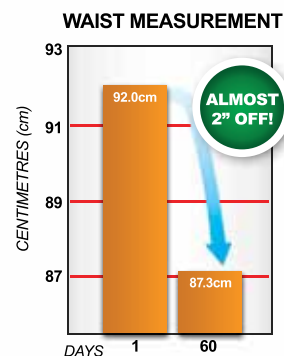
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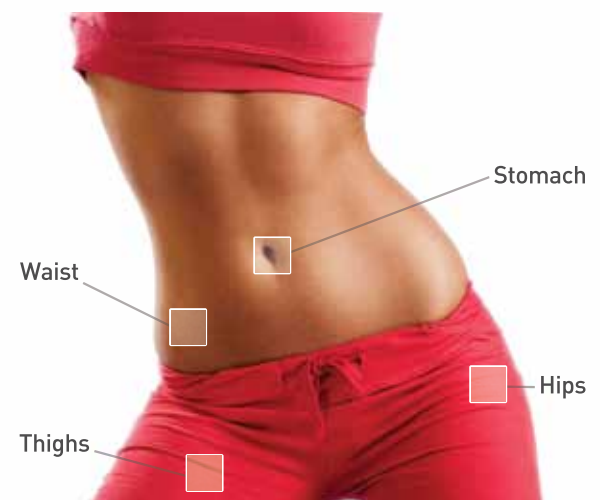
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INTENSE TIMES are on-board at home and afar. A cardinal Grand Cross is taking shape and will be in effect throughout the last half of April, all of May and the first half of June. Even then, the planets stay red hot and will not cool down for some time to come. Let's break it down. The cardinal signs Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn lead off the seasons. They carry great power and energy, especially when visited by the planets. Now, Mars is retrograding in Libra, moving much slower than normal giving him more power and status to wield his fiery sword. In the opposite sign, Aries, we have the provocative and unpredictable planet Uranus and this nice little mix of planetary energy can very well spell upsets, explosions, attacks and war.

Libra is the sign of peace or war and Aries is a very war-like sign. We either get it right or fight for what is right. Adding to the mix, we have Jupiter moving through Cancer and Pluto moving in opposition to him in Capricorn. This is bound to bring all kinds of political intrigue, maneuvering and jousting for position. Religion and politics are the two age-old topics guaranteed to set off all kinds of conflicts, justified or not. Interestingly, these four planets are all forming 90-degree aspects to one another forming a volatile and very dangerous Cross. Fate, destiny and karma come into the play in the form of our world leaders acting out their bit parts on the international stage. Vladimir Putin's Sun is directly aligned with the Grand Cross, as is former President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich's Mars. The US and Canada's Sun degree is also aligned with the Grand Cross. All this while our illustrious leader Stephen Harper experiences a solar eclipse on his Sun indicating a most dramatic year of unrest and stress that most likely will have its effect on Canada and its people.

I guess these troubling times arise in their due course through the ages in order to sort through the karmic indebtedness we accrue as we move through the incarnations. On the positive side, we have a chance to right the wrongs and help bring order and peace to the souls. We are one people on one planet and it might be in these times of strife that we truly get this message. We all deserve love, peace, freedom and happiness and now we will have to do what we must do to make it so. Big changes are in the wind.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email [mac@macsstars.com](mailto:mac@macsstars.com) or call 604-731-1109.

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**ARIES** Mar 21 - Apr 19

Generally, Aries is depicted as the knight that jumps on his charger and goes off in all directions at the same time. Now, you must choose a definite direction and stay the course. Fear not; the stars will help guide you along the way. Stay true to yourself and don't sell out – no matter what.



**TAURUS** Apr 20 - May 21

Life is changing on a grand scale. Of course, Taurus really doesn't like change all that much. They would prefer to stay on familiar ground. Well, that's not going to work now. Everything is strange and there is much to be rearranged. Go with it and you will land exactly where you are destined to be.



**GEMINI** May 22 - Jun 20

While Taurus finds changes abhorrent, Gemini thrives on them. Mid-April offers all kinds of very unique developments and you can choose the pathway that best suits your needs, wants and desires. It may not be a cake-walk and while there is a bit of drama, danger and intrigue involved, you might not mind.



**CANCER** Jun 21 - Jul 22

Cancer is not a passive sign. If anything, Cancerians have great passion and tenacity for any particular thing. Now, it is your time to do your thing. Reach for the gold ring if that is what you truly desire. Strike while the iron is hot; it is red-hot now. Don't go overboard though.



**LEO** Jul 23 - Aug 22

Best get ready for a very hot summer. If it's not hot, it soon will be. Travel, foreign affairs and affairs of the heart may take place. The main point is that you can truly step up your game and achieve outstanding position and recognition. Don't wait; don't hesitate. Start now on your journey of discovery.



**VIRGO** Aug 23 - Sep 22

Life is good; life is sweet. Your solar chart is indicating great opportunities to set yourself up in a very good way. Like attracts like. People with integrity, honour and similar values come into your life now. Relationships feature strongly and, of course, we receive what we put out. Move towards the light.



**LIBRA** Sep 23 - Oct 22

Libra is very involved in the Grand Cross taking shape throughout April. Throw in a Libra full Moon lunar eclipse mid-month and we have a recipe for action and drama. It may be a truly exciting time in which you truly shine or wake up with a shiner. Deep and meaningful communications and negotiations take place.



**SCORPIO** Oct 23 - Nov 21

The Phoenix creates itself a new life form out of the ashes of its old self. The spring season indicates powerful and dramatic changes for Scorpio. Co-rulers Mars and Pluto are very involved in the dynamic cardinal Cross taking shape throughout April bringing on the instinct for deep internal growth and change.



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22 - Dec 21

Lord Jupiter forms an opposition with Pluto in your solar money houses this spring. Money may bring a sense of security and satisfaction, but my bet is you will be feeling restless and seeking a deeper and more meaningful fulfillment. A transformative process is taking place and a new you is birthing along with it.



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22 - Jan 19

Capricorn is one of the signs caught up in the dynamic cardinal Cross taking shape in April. It tells of a time of profound changes. With Lord Saturn retrograding in Scorpio, it is probable you will be rethinking and re-evaluating your value system. Dying and rebirthing is taking place.




**AQUARIUS** Jan 20 - Feb 19

A busy and very involved springtime takes place. Journeys long and short manifest now. Academia, publishing and writing figure into the mix. So does time with friends and family members. Career opportunities present themselves. Some of the decisions that will have to be made may not be easy, but they are very worthwhile.



**PISCES** Feb 20 - Mar 20

Venus, the planet of personal love, affection and creativity, travels through Pisces nearly all of April. Venus is associated with resources and artistic expression. As well, Saturn and Jupiter are casting supportive glances your way bringing stability and good timing. It means you should be very pro-active as you move towards your goals and aspirations. 

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# Just now

an interview with Eckhart Tolle

To read Eckhart Tolle's latest column, please see the current print edition of *Common Ground*. For copyright reasons, we are authorized to publish this column in our print version only.

**JR:** In your new book, I feel like you're the modern equivalent of the explorers that came to the new world, but an explorer and documenter of consciousness, discovering a new world.

**ET:** Yes, discovering is the right word. It's not that you need to make a great effort to attain it or bring it about or acquire it. It's discovering it's already there in you – conscious awareness that's obscured, or partially obscured, in many people. It's a discovery of something already there.

It's like waking up after a dream, because identification with the thinking mind and its stories and the old emotional conditioning is like being immersed in a kind of dream world, which very often turns into a nightmare – acting out old conditioned patterns again and again. The whole structure of the egoic mind is an old dysfunction.

There's some evidence that the ego started about 6,000 years ago, but nobody can say for sure. Before that, humans were in a state of innocence. When we go beyond the dysfunction of the ego, we regain our original innocence, but on a much deeper level. This is why Jesus said unless we become as little children we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

So, returning to the original innocence, and at the same time going much deeper into that with full awareness – that's the process. We're coming out of thousands of years of dreadful suffering, almost the whole of recorded history of humanity. If you really look at it in an unbiased way, as if you'd never seen it before, one cannot but admit that, to a large extent, 80 to 90 percent of it is a history of pathological insanity, the suffering that humans have created for themselves and, of course, inflicting it upon others.

**JR:** And exporting it through colonization to the new world.

**ET:** Yes, so the important part of the awakening process is the realization of the insanity in human history, collectively, to this day playing itself out in world events. Also, to be aware of the insanity within oneself – old, dysfunctional patterns that come again and again that create suffering. So when you see that you're insane, then you're not completely insane. Sanity comes the moment you realize the fact of insanity. To see insanity is not a negative thing.

**JR:** At least you're out of denial.

**ET:** Yes, that's why in the film *A Beautiful Mind*, for example, which is about a mathematical genius who did have a mental dysfunction, his mind was developed in certain areas but he was also insane. The viewer of the film doesn't know that until a certain point when the character realizes that many of his experiences are delusions. At that moment, his healing begins. He's not cured yet, but his healing begins because he's recognized his own insanity. That recognition can only come out of sanity, which is the awareness of unconditioned consciousness.

There's a dimension in us that has nothing to do with content. Self-realization is that I am not that. I'm not my story, not my grievances and hang-ups, not the story of me that I'm telling other people at parties or repeating in my head again and again. That is only form. It's temporary.

When you see what you're not, it's already liberating. Something inside you breathes a sigh of relief. Then, of course, the mind begins to ask, "What are you if you are not that?" It wants an answer. In other words, it wants some new form. It wants a new thought. There must be a thought that I am. But it doesn't work like that. That's why the great book the Tao Te Ching starts with the line that the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao because Tao – in the ancient Chinese way of putting it – is the formless dimension. You could say pure consciousness, but with any term we use we have to be careful it's not mistaken for "It." Otherwise, the mind comes in and says, "Oh, consciousness, yes. I believe that I'm consciousness." It's not another belief. It's finding that spaciousness inside yourself that's there when you let go of identification of form.





# Conflict in relationships

*Conflict cannot survive without your participation. — Wayne Dyer*

There is a dynamic that can happen in couples' relationships that is often unconscious and destructive. I observe it frequently in my practice. It happens when one or both individuals are reacting from a place of unhealed wounds or unfulfilled needs of the inner child.

This triggers an ego reaction wherein one can only focus on his or her own feelings or perspectives. When two young siblings are arguing, it is virtually impossible for them to put themselves in the place of the other and view things from that perspective. Nor do they really care about their sibling's needs or feelings.

Ideally, as they grow, they learn there are two points of view and the goal is to figure out a solution. Sadly, for many, this shift either does not come or it only manifests in public, while in close personal relations, the inner reactive child is in charge. An individual who always takes things personally, is always mad at someone and is judgmental and critical of others is stuck in a wounded child/victim mentality. This individual sees everyone else as the problem and does not see his or her own role in creating perpetual unhappiness.

An interesting feature in this dynamic with couples is they will vacillate between the wounded angry child and the angry, authoritative, critical adult. One is hurt and then launches an attack on the other telling their partner everything they have done wrong, often demeaning and negating the other. This, of course, creates more woundedness for the already upset inner child.

**We cannot blame another for our own poor behaviour. We can stay in a place of integrity even if the other does not.**


In observing this process, at times it looks like two children bickering back and forth and then like a critical adult berating a child. What we do not see is two adults working together rationally to solve a problem.

If there is no awareness of what is happening for them, the couple is constantly fighting, the same issues keep coming up and nothing ever gets resolved. Even if one suggests therapy, the response is often, "You go, you are the one with the problem." If they end the relationship without ever figuring out how and why they reacted as they did, the same dynamic will invariably appear in the next relationship.

What is the solution? First, we need to recognize we draw people into relationships because we have things to learn with them and so things will get triggered in order for us to heal. It is not up to a partner to heal our inner wounds. That is our job. We must become aware of what is being triggered and become the unconditionally loving mother/father to our own inner child.

Second, it is very important to honestly look at our own role in creating and maintaining the conflict. We cannot blame another for our own poor behaviour. We can stay in a place of integrity even if the other does not.

Finally, it is wise to ask ourselves if we are treating our partner the way we want to be treated. Make a list of all the ways you want your partner to treat you. Then review the list and see how well it applies to you. Make a list of all of your partner's behaviours you do not like and see how many of those apply to you.

If we truly do the growth work in our relationships, not only can we enjoy the journey, but we also evolve in consciousness. 

**Gwen Randall-Young** is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, Deep Powerful Change Hypnosis CDs and new Creating Healthy Relationships series, visit [www.gwen.ca](http://www.gwen.ca)



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## The same, but different




Ed Harris and Annette Bening in *The Face of Love*. © 2013 IFC Films.

**T**he truth will out. The surprise in romantic drama *The Face of Love* (due out on the 18th) is that it takes so long to arrive. Annette Bening plays Nikki, a designer still grieving the loss of her husband Garrett (Ed Harris) five years earlier. One day, she spots a dead ringer for Garrett and tracks the stranger down to the local university. After some embarrassing awkwardness, she enrolls in his art class. Tom (also played by Ed Harris) finds Nikki's flirtatious and freaky fascination with him somehow alluring. Nikki, meanwhile, doesn't want to do anything that will break the increasingly fragile illusion. Bening and Harris work well together and manage to paper over some of the gaping holes in the story: such as how Tom and Garrett – the latter who we see in vignetted flashbacks – could be so alike. The chic, sun drenched LA backdrop somehow adds to the sense of normalcy of the situation, but the pay-off is too slow in coming and an interesting late change in the film's tone into psychodrama territory is a case of too little, too late.

Whenever sci-fi fans talk about David Lynch's adaptation of Frank Herbert's classic novel *Dune*, it is in tones of regret about missed opportunity. A new documentary, *Jodorowsky's Dune* (due out 4th), asks what if instead of David Lynch's 1984 flop, cult Chilean filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky had adapted *Dune* for the big screen? In 1975, Jodorowsky had lined up a stellar cast: Orson Welles, Mick Jagger and David Carradine. Even Salvador Dali and the director's own 12-year-old son Brontis were apparently on board. There was a soundtrack by Pink Floyd and art by the era's big talents H.R. Giger and Jean "Moebius" Giraud. However, after two years and 3,000 storyboards, financing didn't happen. Directed by American Frank Pavich, the head-trip of a film includes some unseen realizations of Jodorowsky's vision and interviews with the director himself, now in his 80s.

Anyone interested in the idea of capitalism being more "conscious" and "caring" should check out the hour-long documentary *Not Business As Usual*, which profiles a number of local entrepreneurs trying to fashion businesses that balance social values with the profit motive. The doc, directed by Lawrence Le Lam and written by Rik Klinge-Watt, seems to be an advocacy vehicle for its producer, the business accelerator Institute B. But there's a lot to like and learn as entrepreneurs candidly share their struggles and successes. You can watch the doc for free on Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/838986450>) or better still catch a special screening and panel discussion at Vancity Theatre on the 8th, 6.30PM.

The annual Reel 2 Real Film Festival ([www.2014.r2rfestival.org](http://www.2014.r2rfestival.org)) returns to Vancity Theatre from April 4-11. Aimed at six to 19-year-olds, the festival program is a real mix. 

Robert Alstead is making *Running on Climate*, [www.runningonclimate.com](http://www.runningonclimate.com)





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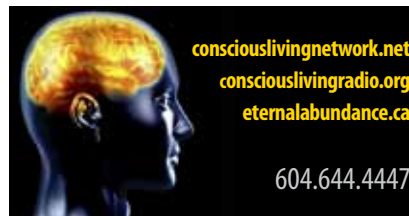
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... *Snowdon* from p.28

had the first open court to review this outside secrecy arrangement. It was called Orwellian and likely unconstitutional. Congress has asked to be briefed and has produced bills to reform it. Two independent White House panels said the programs had never stopped a single imminent terrorism attack in the US. Is it really terrorism we're stopping? Do these programs have any value at all? I say no. All three branches say no as well.

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The bottom line is that terrorism is used as a cover for action. Terrorism provokes an emotional response that allows people to rationalize and authorize programs they wouldn't have otherwise. The US asked for this authority in the 1990s; it asked the FBI to make the case in Congress, and they said no, it's not worth the risk to the economy, it would do too much damage to society to justify gains. But in the post 9/11 era, they used secrecy and justification of terrorism to start programs in secret without asking Congress or the American people. Government behind closed doors is what we must guard against.

**Some people in the intelligence community are said to want you dead.**

It's no mystery that there are governments that want to see me dead. I've been clear again and again and again, I go to sleep thinking about what I can do for the American people. I don't want to harm my government, I want to help them. But the fact that they are willing to completely ignore due process, they are willing to declare guilt without ever seeing a trial, these are things we need to work against as a society. This is not appropriate. ... If we don't change things, if we don't stand up to make the changes we need to

do to make the Internet safe for us and everyone, we'll lose that. That would be a tremendous loss for us and for the world.

**The founder of the web has been calling for a Magna Carta for the Internet. In fact, he's here. Tim Berners-Lee, will you come up on stage? First of all, Tim, which camp are you in?**

**Tim Berners-Lee:** I've given much longer answers to that question, but in short, a hero.

**And Edward, what do you make of the idea of a Magna Carta for the Internet?**

I grew up not just thinking about the Internet, I grew up *in* the Internet. Although I never expected to have the chance to defend it in such a direct and practical manner, or to embody it in this unusual, avatar manner, there's something poetic about it. A Magna Carta for the Internet is exactly what we need to encode values not just in writing but in the structure of the Internet. I hope to invite everyone in the audience, not just in Vancouver, to join and participate.

**TBL:** So the web is 25 years old this month, and we're trying to get people who don't normally think about it, but who use the web from day to day to think about these questions. So Edward, a question for you: what would you think would be the best we can achieve from all the discussions we can have about the web we want?

When we think about it in terms of how far we can go, that question is limited by what we're willing to put in. The Internet we enjoyed in the past has been what we as a nation and people around the world need.

**TED began 30 years ago, in 1984. But it seems Orwell got it wrong, his was almost an optimistic view?**

There is an argument to be made that the powers of Big Brother have increased enormously. A legal article at Yale established the Bankston and Soltani principle. But there is still hope. The power of individuals has also been increased by technology. Individuals can go head to head against the most powerful adversaries and agencies in the world — and win. That's something we need to take hope from and build on to make accessible to everyone. Journalism is not a crime... Communication is not a crime.

**The New York Times is calling for an amnesty for you. Would you welcome the chance to come back?**

Absolutely. There's really no question. The principles that have been the foundation of this project have been the public interest and the principles that underlie the journalistic establishment in the US and around the world. I think if the press is now saying we support this, this is something that needed to happen, that's a powerful argument but it's not final. That's something the public should decide. The government has hinted they want some kind of deal, a compromise deal to come back. But I want to make it very clear. I did not do this to be safe. I did this to do what was right. I won't stop working in the public interest just to benefit myself. [Applause.]

**TED's mission is "ideas worth spreading." What's your idea worth spreading?**

I would say the last year has been a reminder that democracy may die behind closed doors. We don't have to give up privacy to have good government, we don't have to give up liberty to have security. By working together we can have open government and private lives. I look forward to working with everyone to see that happen. [Extended standing ovation.]

# Grim ferry tales and a premier's flip-flop

**D**espite a rapidly declining customer base, the ongoing strategy of hiking prices is an ongoing business “death spiral,” rippling through and dragging down the economy across the province.

Ridership on the Gabriola ferry has plummeted. In February, vehicles were down 17% with 13% fewer passengers compared to 2013. Across BC Ferries, vehicle traffic was off 4% to 7% and 3% to 15% on other minor routes. That’s even before further fare increases this month. In contrast, Denmark’s ferry prices were

CKNW talk show host in 2008 was played, a flip-flop of epic proportions and the rally highlight:

**From Christy Clarke’s stint as a talk show host on CKNW radio:**

*“BC ferry fares have finally gotten so high that for every dollar they raise, it will actually garner less in revenue.*

*“Higher fares mean fewer passengers so the accountants will have to subtract paying customers from every new dollar. And at this rate, how long will it be before they abandon the routes where they don’t*

case – any better!” When asked about the tape, Clarke bolted from a press conference, nearby.

Speakers outside included federal Green Party leader Elizabeth May, Victoria Mayor Dean Fortin, Islands Trust chair Sheila Malcolmson, Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore, the chair of Metro Vancouver board as well as representatives from business, labour, community and the NDP caucus. Powell River–Sunshine Coast MLA Nicholas Simons delivered 2,200 petition signatures from his riding.

This year’s largest protest at the leg also featured songs by Juno award-winning Valdy and Gary Fjellgaard, the Kerplunks and others. The crowd brandished signs reading, “Now You’ve Pissed Off Grandma” and “Grim Ferry Tales,” but their call for a moratorium – until socio-economic impact studies (not undertaken by government) can be completed – fell on deaf ears.

Liberal ferry policy has united coastal communities around a common goal of scrapping the 2003 Coastal Ferry Act, which created what the British call a “quango,” a quasi-non-government organization. Blocks away at BC Ferries’ flashy headquarters, bloated management banked non-performance bonuses while conjuring up cruise-ship-like tourist contests. Returning home, protestors were greeted with boilerplate form letters from Minister Stone, their questions and comments ignored, and yet another BCFS telephone survey about the customer experience card by the Mustel group.

Cam Pirie of Walcan Seafood on Quadra Island spoke about his family’s 40 year-old seafood processing business. It employs 150, has a gross annual revenue of more than \$30 million and spends \$1.3 million every year on BC Ferries. It is contemplating using barges or relocating.

As Pirie noted, increases in rates have resulted in lost revenues “in the form of lost jobs, devalued property, displaced families and weakened businesses. This continues to cost the province far more money than that gained by raising fares – losses that affect all BC taxpayers.”

On March 15, for those who couldn’t afford ferry fares, local protests were staged along the coast, including Quadra where 100 people walked on the noon ferry to Campbell River, intending to rally and sail back as they have done previously. But this time K-9 Security was waiting on-board. RCMP were called as numerous head counts were conducted, including car passengers – who had nothing to do with the protest – told to leave the ferry for the parking lot, delaying the ferry for two sailings. “Shoddy treatment” and “intimidation,” Quadra residents said in complaints to Stone and Clarke.

Fares have now increased, with more increases on the way. This month, cuts will be made in sailings but not in management or at Duke Point, which loses \$25 million annually. Other communities are nervously awaiting further decisions from BC Ferries while their travel costs spiral beyond affordability, forcing them to make “tough decisions” about their options. **K**



reduced an average 9% and ridership increased 13% with revenues rising 3%, \$20 million more than in 2012.

European tour operators have also been impacted by ferry cuts in BC; they’re furious that Stone replaced the Queen of Chilliwack (115 cars, 300 passengers) with the Nimpkish that accommodates only 16 vehicles, including room for only four RVs. And during the nine-hour Discovery Coast sailing, tourists’ only food option is a vending machine.

At the BC Ferries protest in Victoria on March 11, Cowichan elder Ron George asked, “How does it feel to be treated like an Indian? To live in legislated poverty, kept in the dark where no one will listen? Get used to it. You can’t stop [with] gatherings and demonstrations like this.”

Among those not listening is Transportation Minister Todd Stone. He promised to look coastal communities “in the eye,” but then stayed in hallways, repeating his media mantra, “This government is making tough decisions to keep BC Ferries affordable and sustainable.”

Also a no-show was Premier Christy Clarke, similarly sequestered to avoid addressing the 1,500 citizens who travelled via school and charter buses, car pools and yes, ferries – within a day’s reach of the capital on Vancouver Island. Nevertheless, she stole the show as a “virtual premier” when a recording of an editorial she delivered as a

*make any money? How long before the provincial government abandons its responsibility to provide a public service to many of the people who depend on ferries to travel or to ship their goods?*

*“Our transportation minister seems to have an insatiable appetite for funding highways, if they require blacktop, and he seems perfectly at peace with providing free ferries on inland lakes in BC, but he doesn’t seem to have the same affection for our maritime highway on the coast.*

*“Why don’t they say that they’re subsidizing people who live in Whistler by the massive expansion of the Sea to Sky Highway? I mean, I occasionally go up to Whistler; I suppose I benefit from that expansion of the highway, but the math they do suggests that only people who live at the end of one of these transportation routes are the people who are being subsidized. Why don’t they do that – apply the same math to the highways they build, then maintain, that they do to the ferry routes?*

*“Am I subsidizing people, wealthy people, who can afford a second home in Whistler?”*

“Precisely,” said organizers from the Gulf Islands, Northern Vancouver Island, coastal outposts and First Nations communities. “We can’t say it – or make our



# Goosebumps & memories

**W**hen the Soweto Gospel Choir received its first Grammy in 2007, it took the coveted award home to South Africa and its biggest fan: Nelson Mandela. The highly acclaimed 52-member group performed at many of his family's functions, including his granddaughter's wedding and his memorial service late last year in the soccer stadium in Soweto.

"He loved our music. Anytime he could, he would come see the choir. So we wanted to present him with that award," said choirmaster and choreographer Shimmy Jiyane. "Watching and listening to him, you got goosebumps. You don't forget those kind of moments."

**The day Mandela died, the choir dressed as employees of a mall in Pretoria and surprised shoppers with a flash mob that went viral on YouTube.**

Goosebumps and unforgettable memories are also part of the choir's performances. A global phenomenon, they're currently on a North American tour performing tribute concerts to Mandela and celebrating the 20th anniversary of the end of apartheid. (The choir performs in Vancouver on April 13 at the QE.)

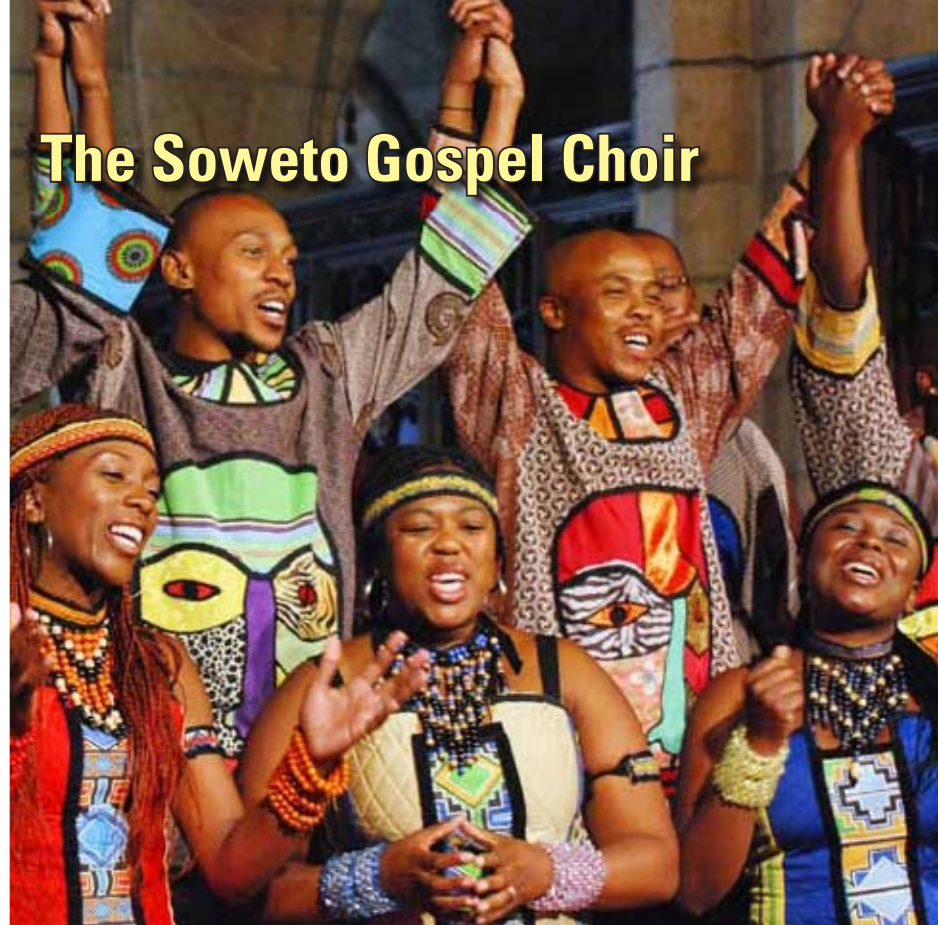
The day Mandela died, the choir dressed as employees of a mall in Pretoria and surprised shoppers with a flash mob that went viral on YouTube. The stirring rendition of *Asimbonanga*, written by Johnny Clegg (See "Nelson Mandela and the Power of Music," *Common Ground*, January, 2014), is now featured in the tour.

"Madiba was our father, motivator and leader," added Jiyane, a tenor and founding member of the group in 2002. "He changed South Africa and the world. He continues to be our beacon of hope for what the future can bring if the past is forgiven."

Filling stages with colour and high-energy movement, the choir performs dances of different South African tribal groups, including the high-kicking Zulu, shoulder and footwork of the Tswana and swing-like Kofifi. Meanwhile, the singers weave nuanced harmonies into an evocative sound with melodies of African spirituals, American gospel and pop tunes. From Carnegie Hall to the Sydney Opera House, the choir has shared stages with the likes of Peter Gabriel, Bono, Aretha Franklin and Stevie Wonder.

"Every song we perform is chosen because it has a powerful message and it makes us feel something, whether joyous or sad," Jiyane continued. "Music truly is the international language. It has the ability to break down barriers and bring joy into the listener's heart. And we want our audiences to be moved, to connect with our passion and to leave feeling inspired and uplifted."


Choral music is a wonderful gift to



receive, even better to give, with benefits beyond other human activities. It expresses emotion better than language and has a spiritual dimension that reverberates through time, in and out of churches. Group singing communicates other cultures and eras more effectively than history books and courses. Madrigals take us to Renaissance England, spirituals to the experience of Black Americans and Africans.

However, recent research is uncovering unimagined health benefits in the worldwide rise of choirs. Chorus America estimates that 32.5 million adults sing in choirs south of the border, up 10 million over the past six years. Watch for an upcoming feature on community choirs in *Common Ground*.

Don't deny yourself the personal joy experienced by the Soweto Gospel Choir. The BC Choral Federation is the umbrella group for more than 300 choirs here. The website <http://www.bcchoralfed.com/> has everything you need to know choir-wise. Chorfest, the federation's flagship event, is in Vancouver May 2-4.

**April 8:** For those who want to learn more about another African example of healing, the School of Community & Social Justice is staging a one-day course in New Westminster: "**Trauma, Reconciliation and Peacemaking After Mass-Violence: Learning From Rwanda**." It includes storytelling and music. Visit [www.jibc.ca](http://www.jibc.ca). Search for the School of Community & Social Justice and then click on Special Events. 



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# Vibes

## Reflections on light and darkness Part 1: The sword of light

by Geoff Olson

more complex story.

I'm hardly the first to comment on the 'sword of light.' In fact, I have cheerfully taken the term from Italo Calvino's 1983 novel *Mr. Palomar*. The book's eponymous hero visits a beach, a zoo, a cheese museum, a sand garden and other mundane destinations. In the first chapter, he decides on an evening swim and discovers that no matter how he approaches the water, "he remains the vertex of that sharp, gilded triangle; the sword follows him, pointing him out like the hand of a watch whose pivot is the sun."

The sword is imposed equally on the eye of each swimmer; there is no avoiding it, he concludes. "Is what we have in common precisely what is given to each of us as something exclusively his?" He then considers that none of this is happening on the water or the sun. It's occurring inside his head; the sword of light exists there alone.

Mr. Palomar cannot conceive of what happens to the sword of light when all the swimmers and crafts have returned and turned their backs on an empty shore. He finds his identity disintegrating in a thought-mediated hall of mirrors. Perhaps the phenomenal world is "just reflection among reflections, me included," he muses.

But didn't the light reflect off the surface of the seas for millions, if not billions, of years before eyes had evolved to see it?

"Mr. Palomar swims under water, surfaces; there is the sword! One day an eye emerged from the sea, and the sword, already there waiting for it, could finally display its fine, sharp tip and its gleaming splendour. They were made for each other, sword and eye: and perhaps it was not the birth of the eye that caused the birth of the sword, but vice versa, because the sword had to have an eye to observe it at its climax."

He dries himself off with a towel and returns home, "convinced the sword will exist even without him."

Italo Calvino died just a few years after the publication of *Mr. Palomar*. "Europe regarded Calvino's death as a calamity for culture," wrote novelist Gore Vidal, Calvino's neighbour in a 1985 apprecia-

tion for the *New York Review of Books*. The author's funeral was a state event in Italy; he was buried in the village cemetery at Castiglione della Pescaia, with parliamentarians, school children and fellow authors in sober attendance amongst vast floral wreaths "suitable for a Neapolitan gangster," in Vidal's words.

I wonder what Mr. Palomar – or rather his inquisitive creator – would have made of another light phenomenon: a rainbow?

Rainbows result when water droplets suspended in the air act as tiny prisms, splitting white light into constituent colours. But a rainbow does not actually exist at a particular location in the sky. Its apparent position depends on the observer's location and the position of the sun; at the "antisolar" point, which is directly opposite the sun in the sky. If the atmospheric conditions are right, you will complete the geometrical configuration and see a rainbow.

The rainbow shifts position as you move, just like the sword of light. Different observers at different positions will complete the geometry with different water droplets – and the rainbow centred at the antisolar point will always have an angular radius of 42 degrees (a number that will undoubtedly excite fans of Douglas Adams' novel, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*).

Ancient Romans and Etruscans interpreted rainbows as portents of great change: the death of kings, the invasion of cities and other worrisome events. For moderns, the rainbow image has become an all-purpose icon for branding Saturday morning cartoon characters, political parties and human rights groups. It has become tired shorthand for happy-face optimism, yet the actual phenomenon retains its power to amaze.

A few years back, my partner and I were in North Vancouver's Upper Lynn Valley on a damp afternoon hike when we witnessed a double rainbow so technicolour intense we felt compelled to point it out to others in the streets. People stopped in their tracks and craned their necks, grokking at a sight halfway between Sistine Chapel kitsch and a Panavision fever dream.

Remember "Double Rainbow Guy?" Several years ago, Hungrybear9562, aka



Sunset was nearing as my partner and I relaxed against a log on Ambleside Beach on an unseasonably warm afternoon in late winter. The oblique rays from the sun cast the Lions Gate Bridge in sharp relief against the Smurf-blue skies, making the structure look both more substantial and dreamlike at the same time. Our dog, a Rottweiler-Lab-Collie mix, was pawing at driftwood, insisting I throw it into the water for her.

As I dragged the wood toward the shore, I noticed how the sun's reflection created an incandescent sword of light on the water, pointing from the horizon toward my feet. I threw the stick with all my might and it broke the sword of light into diamond-like fragments. The gleaming ripples quickly merged back into the undulating sword, only to be broken up

again by my dog's earnest paddle toward the bobbing wood.

The Ambleside walkway was populated by smiling couples, power walkers, dog lovers, dogs and wealthy West Van matrons draped in gleaming bangles and bracelets. Anyone looking out into the water from this quarter-mile expanse would have been granted the same sight: the sword pointing in their direction from the sea horizon – a blinding cutlass that tracked them as they walked. Different from each perspective and unique to every observer.

The sword of light is not an "object" in any usual sense. Its existence depends on a combination of sun, water and observer. And though the optics behind it seem straightforward – light reflecting off the surface of water – the high school trigonometry belies a



Paul Vasquez, posted a video on YouTube of a brilliant double rainbow near his Yosemite cabin. He babbled, laughed and cried for joy throughout the four-minute clip. “What does it mean? What does it mean?” Double Rainbow Guy swoons



The rainbow image  
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phenomenon retains  
its power to amaze.

while recording the dazzling display on the horizon.

Late-night host Jimmy Kimmel tweeted the YouTube moment, pronouncing it the funniest video in the world. Millions of hits followed. The hosts of ABC’s *Good Morning America* asked Vasquez if he was on drugs. “I was just on pure rainbow power. It was just the spirit of the

universe influencing me,” he responded.

Vasquez’s clip made it sound like he was either high or unhinged. Or perhaps he was just missing a few filters and one of nature’s wonders struck his retro-hippie heart like a bull’s-eye. It was hard to tell how much people were laughing at the YouTube subscriber or laughing with him – mostly the former, I’m afraid. He wasn’t visible in the clip so this wasn’t your usual online exercise in Internet narcissism. The bearded Yosemite resident repurposed his post-rainstorm ecstasy as global entertainment; in response, the professional cynics of broadcast media interpreted his stupefaction as stupidity.

Mr. Vasquez had more than the usual 15 minutes of fame allotted most YouTube stars. The Internet band The Gregory Brothers autotuned his vocals into an up-tempo sing-song and performed it live with Vasquez. *Saturday Night Live* followed with Jimmy Fallon’s dead-on impression of Neil Young quavering his new song, *Double Rainbow*. The original video was overwhelmed by dozens of mock-ups, send-up and parodies, somewhere between homage and fromage.

In any case, there was something admirable in anyone being so nakedly awestruck before a global audience –

even if his rainbow sighting lost a lot of oomph when filmed with a shaky handheld camera and converted to a 240 dpi YouTube clip.

Paul Vasquez wasn’t that much different from Italo Calvino in his response to nature. The author used a fictional proxy to convey his intellectual wonderment at a display of light *reflection*. The Yosemite resident used a videocamera to record a display of light *refraction*. Calvino’s route was through the mind. Vasquez took the trickier route in our culture of snark – through the heart.

Like Calvino’s sword of light, rainbows seem to hover in the twilight zone between objective reality and subjective truth. Do such age-old ‘personal tracking devices’ mean anything without an observer? Mr. Palomar would have undoubtedly said yes, but most scientists would give a more qualified answer. Yes, you can remove the human observer and put in a mechanical proxy – a camera or videocamera – and the rainbow will show up in a digital image for later inspection.

But a stream of ones and zeroes cannot be interpreted as ‘rainbow’ by any technical device incapable of perceiving colour, which is a subjective artifact the mind

weaves out of light frequencies.

Photons themselves, the subatomic packets of energy that light up our world sometimes behave like waves and sometimes like particles. It’s a paradox that common sense rejects even while science exploits it in everything from solar panels to smart phones. “Now, my own suspicion is that the Universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we *can* suppose,” observed British scientist J.B.S Haldane in 1927, a remark that has only gained greater currency now that astronomers have determined the cosmos is composed mostly of ‘dark matter’ and ‘dark energy.’

The sun is now a glowing ball half immersed on the horizon. My dog returns from the water with another huge piece of driftwood in her mouth. She drops it to the ground and shakes off the water. A faint prismatic display appears briefly in the cloud of droplets thrown from her hide: a rainbow. I get a mild jolt of delight in seeing this. When it comes to light – the most immediate expression of the subatomic realm in our daily lives – my canine-aided enchantment is as warranted as Mr. Palomar’s beachside absorption or Mr. Vasquez’s YouTube epiphany.

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### APR 8

**Trauma, Reconciliation & Peacemaking After Mass-Violence;** Learning from Rwanda with Maggie Ziegler. 9AM-4:30PM, \$175. Justice Institute, New Westminster. 1-888-865-7764, JIBC.ca/course/spe157

### APR 10 & MAY 13

**Free Shamanic Power Initiation & Open House** hosted by the Institute of Shamanic Medicine. 7:30, Vancouver. RSVP at info@shamanicmedicine.ca or call 778-227-2939. www.shamanicmedicine.ca

### APR 22

**Exploring Psychedelic Medicines** with keynote speaker Gabor Mate. Hear leading therapists & scholars. At SFU, Harbour Centre. Limited seating. Doors open 6:30PM. Tickets online at maps.org/featureevents, orders@maps.org

### APR 24

**In Vancouver. Awaken Spiritually: Free Jyoti Meditation Workshop.** 7PM. Angel Hands Wellness, Upstairs #201-1416 West 8 Ave. Register: Linda, 604-985-5840, lindabee@gmail.com. Drop-ins welcome.

### APR 24-27

**Fasting Retreat:** Includes Accommodation, Restorative Yoga, Juice Fasting, Colonics, Massage, Far Infrared Sauna, Light Therapy, Japanese Energy Work. \$899. 604-729-3120. archerinthemountains@gmail.com eaglevalleyretreat.com

### APR 25 & 27

**Apr 25: Food for the Brain - Mood, Memory & Motivation,** 7-9PM with Patrick Holford.  
**Apr 27: Mental Health Regained Workshop & Panel Discussion,** 2-4PM. Fairmont Hotel, 900 W. Georgia, Vancouver. Register to guarantee seating. By donation. \$20 suggested. 416-733-2117, www.orthomolecularhealth.com

### APR 25-27

**The Nature of Relationship** with Dr. Harshad Parekh. At the Krishnamurti Educational Centre in a beautiful ocean-front setting near Victoria. Register at www.krishnamurti-Canada.ca, 250-744-3354, programs@krishnamurti-canada.ca

### APR 26

**Starting Up Your Organic Garden: FREE Class** 2PM. Meditation/Ecology Centre, 11011 Shell Rd., Richmond. Linda, 604-985-5840, lindabee@gmail.com. Drop-ins welcome.

### APR 26-27

**Build Healthy Relationships Workshops I & II,** Saturday-Sunday, 10AM-5PM, \$55 each day, Master Sha's Soul Healing Centre Vancouver, 1280 Odium Drive, Vancouver. www.MasterShaSoulHealingCentreVancouver.com

### APR 26-28

**Spring Festival of Awareness,** Naramata Centre near Penticton, BC. 47 workshops, healing oasis, festival store & more. Adults \$170, teens/seniors \$145. www.issuesmagazine.net

### APR 27

**In Richmond. Awaken Spiritually: Free Jyoti Meditation Workshop.** 2PM. Meditation & Ecology Centre, 11011 Shell Road. Please pre-register: Linda, 604-985-5840, lindabee@gmail.com Drop-ins welcome.

### MAY 3-4

**In Vancouver: Become a "Certified Coach Practitioner"** in our popular two-day training+ continuous education program. www.certifiedcoachesfederation.com, 1-866-455-2155.

### MAY 7

**Free lecture: Discovering the Past to Change our Karma.** 7PM at Metrotown (meeting room by Old Navy) www.agea-gnose.org 604-349-1327.

### MAY 10

**Power of Visualization:** Visit www.hypnosis.bc.ca or admin@hypnosis.bc.ca for registration and event details.

### MAY 15

**Discover the Wisdom Within You:** Book signing with author Anne Archer Butcher. Presented by Eckankar. 7-8PM, Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia, The Alma & Peter Room.

### MAY 17

**Spiritual Experiences Fair:** Change Your Consciousness, Change Your Life. 1:30-4PM, UBC, 6138 Student Union Blvd. Free event, everyone welcome. Presented by Eckankar. 1-844 I AM SOUL.

### MAY 17-18

**I Can Do It! Mind-Body-Soul Retreat,** Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver. With Carolyn Myss, Bruce Lipton, Wayne Dyer, Doreen Virtue & more. 800-654-5126 or www.hayhouse.com/events See display ad.

### MAY 23

**Explore the Mother/Daughter Mirrors:** Discover the Impact. A shamanic relationship for all women over the age of 18. With shamanic practitioner Sonya Weir (www.eaglefreshamaniccoaching.com) and Maggie Fox. 6:30PM, in Vancouver. \$40. Register: sonyaweir@uniserve.com or 778-227-2939.

### MAY 24

**Open House - Institute of Holistic Nutrition (Vancouver):** Course/Career opportunities, exhibits, lectures & more. 10AM-3:30PM, 604 West Broadway, Ste. 300. www.instituteofholisticnutrition.com

### MAY 24-25

**Bach Flower Course:** Learn how to use the Bach flowers to help both pets and the people in your life. www.BachFlowersCanada.com, 250-331-3228.

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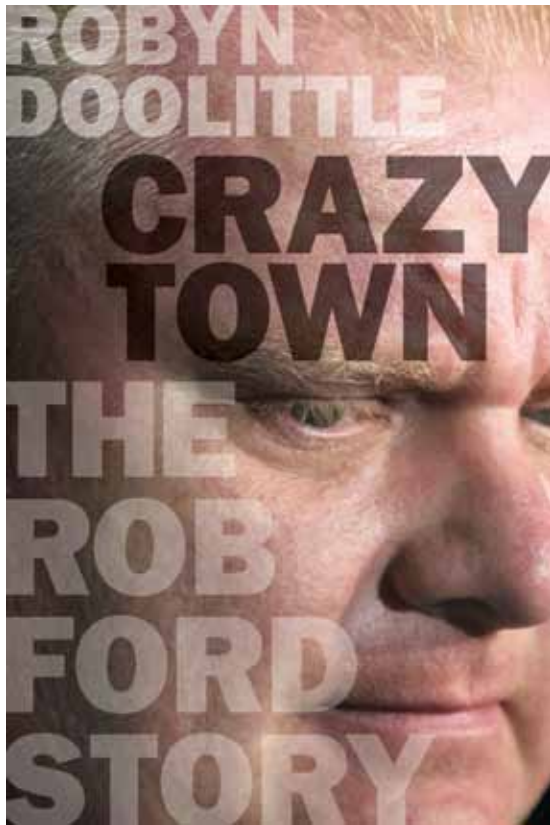
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# Ford Nation

## Political thriller and psychological study

I picked up a copy of *Crazy Town: The Rob Ford Story* – one of the most eagerly anticipated books of the season – telling myself it was a ‘guilty pleasure’ and an opportunity to fill blanks, connect dots, shed light, sort chaos. Movie rights sold immediately and it topped best-seller charts from the get-go. The Toronto Public Library ordered 145 copies, but it will take years for everyone with a hold request to get their hands on a copy.

I confess. I couldn’t put it down. And I managed to make contact with the author Robyn Doolittle – one of three reporters who viewed the legendary crack video – now in the limelight almost as much as her subject. Robyn noted, “The whole experience of being interviewed – when I’m the one usually asking the questions – has been odd. And as a print reporter, I feel like a fish out of water in front of a camera. But I’m getting a chance to talk about my work, about this profession that I love and believe in. And I certainly have a newfound appreciation for what it’s like to be on the receiving end of this stuff.”


“In writing the book, I relied on two thousand hours of interviews, with hundreds of individuals, over four years covering City Hall; people in politics, law enforcement, friends, family, opponents, former employees and staff, business associates and classmates. I consulted thousands of pages of court documents, arrest paperwork, debate transcripts, family records, thousands of news stories and sources who sometimes didn’t want their names printed for fear of professional repercussions and legal implications.”

Don’t judge this book by its cover. It’s serious, old-school journalism by a young, trained and dogged reporter, who fact-checked and relentlessly tracked leads and reliable sources on the most explosive story of her career. In the face of heated and unrelenting criticism and death threats, it’s a rare, fascinating

glimpse behind-the-scenes of Canada’s largest surviving daily, the *Toronto Star*.

Some critics call Doolittle and her colleagues a latter-day Woodward and Bernstein. But the world has moved on since *All the President’s Men*, at high-tech-fuelled warp speed into a warped neo-con parallel universe. *Crazy Town* is also Canadian. It’s part political thriller and part psychological study of our largest city, our most widely known citizen and our longest running gag, scandal and embarrassment.

I wanted to know how Rob Ford is still a serious contender for one of the nation’s most powerful jobs in an election seven months away. And, oh yes, why his family refer to themselves as “Canada’s Kennedys” and consider themselves destined to lead, Ford Nation, at least?

Doolittle’s book delivers. Literature in a hurry, three months in the making. The first draft of history, an unfinished, unfolding story. *Crazy Town* is for crazy times and folks who want to know how we got into this mess so we can get out of it or be doomed to repeat mistakes of the past. 

**Bruce Mason** is a Vancouver and Gabriola-Island based five-string banjo player, gardener, freelance writer and author of *Our Clinic*. [brucemason@shaw.ca](mailto:brucemason@shaw.ca)



Author Robyn Doolittle

For many months, I tried in vain to avoid the mere mention of Rob Ford, the world’s most famous/infamous mayor. But as movie magnate Samuel Goldwyn said, “In two words, im possible.”

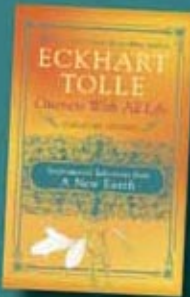
A friend of mine recently returned from New Delhi and recalled having tea with folks from Peru and Sweden. When she said she was from Canada, they leaned forward in wide-eyed, rapt unison, asking, “What’s the latest on your mayor?”

Let’s face it; right now our country is best known now for Justin Bieber, the Tar Sands and RoFo as he is referred to in TO. Peacekeeping, political compromise, politeness (and Pamela Anderson), all swept away by celebrity and sensation-obsessed 24-hour news cycles.


“It’s hard to hide 300 pounds of fun,” says Rob Ford, mayor of the fourth largest city in North America.

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